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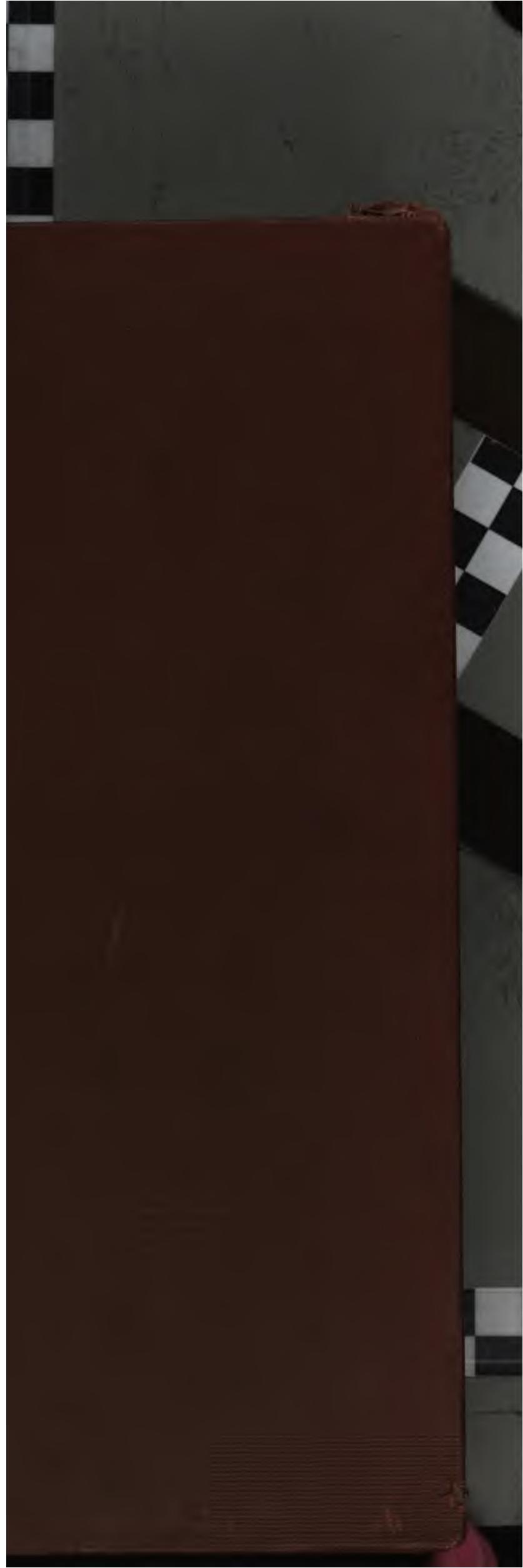
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of God, and co-heirs with Christ; and from the work of the spirit upon their souls, which is a fruit and effect of redeeming grace; and from the benefits of redemption being applied to them, such as righteousness, pardon of sin, atonement, and the like; this is certain, that they to whom the blessings of redemption are applied, are interested in the Redeemer, who may justly conclude, from their receiving *the earnest of the redemption of the purchased inheritance*, that they shall enjoy the whole: The connexion between grace and glory is inseparable, and he that has the one may be sure of the other. So much for the first article of Job's faith.

II. The second article in this creed is, that the living Redeemer *shall stand upon the earth in the latter day*. The word *day* is not in the original text, but is a supplement of the translators; hence some interpreters leaving it out, refer the word *latter* or *last*, not to time, but persons, about whom they cannot agree: some ascribing it to God the Father, who is *the first and the last*, the eternal God, who, as he is before all creatures, so he will continue after all have had their beings, and have acted their part in this world. Others to Jesus Christ, to whom the same characters of *Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*, belong. Others to Job himself, who, they suppose, calls himself *the last upon the earth*, that is to say, "the meanest among men", the most desppicable "of creatures, the off-scouring of all things, and the refuse of the earth;" and yet, notwithstanding this, declares his faith and confidence, that he should *stand*, keep his ground, maintain his cause, and carry his point against his friends, having an interest in such a Redeemer. But, for my own part, I am inclined to think, that the *living Redeemer* mentioned in the first article, is designed in this, and that the words belong to him, which, according to the different versions they will admit of, refer to different things.

1. Reading them as they are rendered by our translators, *He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*, they may design the incarnation of Christ, and hold forth Job's faith in it. This was an article in his creed, that the same Redeemer, who then lived and existed in heaven, should descend from thence, not by local motion, but by assumption of the human nature, and stand and dwell with men here upon this earth. Thus, according to Job's faith, *the word was made flesh and dwelt among us*; conversed with mortals upon earth upwards of thirty years, travelled over the land of Judea, took many fatiguing journeys, went about doing good, at length died for his people, and was buried in this earth.

Now

¹ Vid. Mercerum in loc.

² Vid. Caryl in loc.

³ Vid. Bolducium in loc.

⁴ So Ultimus Myforum, "the last of the Myrians," a poor mean people in Phrygia, was used proverbially of one that was exceeding despisable and contemptible. Quid porro in Graeco sermone sam tritum atque celebratum est, quam, si quis despiciatur dicitur, ut Myforum ultimus dicatur, Ciceron. Orat. 24. pro L. Flacco, p. 785. Ed. Gothofred.

⁵ John i. 14.

Now it was in *the last days* that God sent this Redeemer, and spake to us by this his Son¹: It was once in *the end of the world* that Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

2. If we read the words as they may be, and are rendered; *He shall rise the last out of the earth, or dust*². Then they express Job's faith in the resurrection of Christ, that as he should appear on earth, converse a while here, then die, and be buried, so he should rise again; God would not leave his soul in hell, (or the grave) or suffer his body One to see corruption³. When Christ is said to rise *the last out of the dust*, this is not to be understood, as though he should be the last man that should rise from the dead; so far from this, that he is the first that rose from the dead to a life of immortality: God first shewed him the path of an immortal life, hence he is called *the first-fruits of them that slept*, and *the first-born from the dead*⁴; but when he is said to rise *the last*, this, as some well observe, is to be understood of him as the last Adam, in opposition to the first man; and so it is written, *The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit*⁵. The resurrection of Christ is a considerable article of faith, much depends upon it; it has a great influence both on our justification and regeneration: The whole system of the christian religion is nothing without it; if this is not true, our faith and hope are both in vain; nor have we any reason to expect the resurrection of our bodies, or look for the blessed hope. Hence the resurrection of Jesus was a principal subject of primitive preaching, and ought not to be neglected now.

3. If we translate the words as they may be translated, thus, *He shall stand at the latter day above, or over the earth*, they may refer to Christ's second coming to judgment, when he will descend from heaven, come in the clouds of it, and appear in the air, over the earth, where he will be met by the living saints, and will judge the world in righteousness. This was a very early article of faith; the Jews say⁶, that the dispute and quarrel between Cain and Abel was about this; the one asserting, the other denying, that there would be a future judgment. However, Enoch, the seventh from Adam⁷, prophesied of it, and of *the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his saints*, to execute it. It was known and believed in Job's time; he asserts it, and acquaints his friends with it; *that ye may know*, says he, *that there is a judgment*⁸. This has been, and ought to be, a generally received truth, "that after death is judgment." Nothing is more certain, than

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¹ Heb. i. 2. and ix. 26. ² Nempe ego novi Redemptorem meum vivum, qui postremus ex palvere (terra) surget. So Noldius in his Concordant. Ebraeo-Chald. particular. p. 676. n. 1750. where he gives many instances of the particle *בְּ* being so used.

³ Psalm xvi. 10. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 10. Coloss. i. 18.

⁵ Caryl in loc. Lightfoot, vol. II. p. 279. See also Junius in loc. ⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

⁷ So the particle *בְּ* is rendered in Gen. i. 20. Ezek. i. 25. and in other places.

⁸ In Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. iv. 8. ⁹ Jude 14, 15. ¹⁰ Job xix. 29.

the coming of Christ to judgment : or, than that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad¹.

4. If we render the words as they may be rendered, thus, *He shall stand at the latter day against the earth*², they may intend the general resurrection of the dead by Christ. The bodies of men are laid, imprisoned, and detained in the earth, nor is it in the power of any creature to release them ; but Christ will appear, and stand against the earth in the latter day ; he will contend with it, and get the victory over it ; death and the grave will be obliged to surrender up their dead to him, who has the keys of hell and death, and can at his pleasure open the gates of the grave, and set the prisoners free ; destroy the power of death, and quicken the dust of men. This now is, and ought to be, an article of our creed, which was one of Job's, of the Old Testament saints, and the ancient Jews in general, and of Christ and his apostles, namely, *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*³.

III. The third article of Job's faith is his own mortality and dissolution ; he knew and believed that he should die, return to the dust, and be consumed by worms. Though he puts an if upon man's dying in one place, *if a man die*⁴ ; yet it was no question with him, whether he would die or no, for in the same chapter he says, *man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble ; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not : Man dieth and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he*⁵? Nor had he any doubt about his own mortality and death, he knew that God would bring him to death, and to the house appointed for all living⁶ ; he looked for it, he expected it in a little time ; when a few years are come, says he, *then I shall go the way whence I shall not return*⁷.

Death is the fruit of sin ; God threatened it in case of disobedience to his will ; it entered into the world by it, is the just wages of it ; and since all have sinned, none are exempted from it, or what is equivalent to it ; *It is appointed unto men once to die* ; no man can secure himself from it, or hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death ; and there is no discharge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver such who are given to it⁸. Such who are hardened in sin, and would out-brave death and hell, who say, *we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement* ; their covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with hell shall not stand⁹. And indeed, the righteous are as liable to the stroke of death as the wicked ; *Your fathers, where*

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

² So hy is often rendered, as in Isa. xxix. 8. Jer. xi. 19. Ezek. xxix. 2. and in many other places.

³ Acts xxiv. 16.

⁴ Job xiv. 14.

⁵ Job xiv. 1, 2, 10.

⁶ Job xxx. 23.

⁷ Job xvi. 22.

⁸ Eccles. viii. 8.

⁹ Isa. xxviii. 15—18.

where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? It may, perhaps, seem strange, that these should die, since Christ has died for them, and abolished death, and him that had the power of it: And indeed, though they do die, they do not die like other men, there is a difference between the death of the righteous and of the wicked; Christ by dying has took away the sting of death, removed its curse, and turned it into a privilege and blessing; *death is yours*: It is not inflicted on them as a penal evil, or by way of punishment for sin, but that they may be entirely rid of it; and that when their bodies are raised immortal, incorruptible, spiritual and glorious, these, with their souls, may enjoy an eternity of happiness.

Death is here expressed by a destruction of the body by worms, and by a consumption of the reins; *after, or besides my skin, worms will destroy this body, and my reins will be consumed within me*. Death is properly a separation of soul and body; the consumption of the body in all its parts, internal and external, skin and reins, is the fruit and effect of death and the grave; where the body lying a little while, is subject to corruption and rottenness. Now by this destruction of the body we are not to understand an annihilation of it, for though the body returns to dust, and sees corruption, yet it is not reduced to nothing. The dead indeed are not; they are not in the land of the living, existing among, and conversing with men, as formerly, yet they are in being. God will destroy not only meats, but the belly; not as to its substance, but as to its present use, when it will be no more employed in the service it now is. If the body was annihilated by death, Christ would lose part of his purchase, yea, part of his mystical self, and the Spirit his dwelling-place; for the bodies of the saints, as well as their souls, are bought with the price of his blood, and are members of him, and temples of the Holy Ghost. Besides, the resurrection would not be properly a resurrection, but a new creation^o.

IV. A fourth article in Job's confession of faith is, the resurrection of the same body. This he firmly believed, though he knew his body would be destroyed by worms, and his reins be consumed within him; otherwise he could not have said, or believed, or hoped, that he should *see God in his flesh, and for himself*; and, that his eyes should behold him, and not another. When he says, in another place, *If a man die, shall he live again?*^s which, according to the usual sense of such interrogations, without a negative particle, must be answered, No, he shall not live again; his meaning is, that he shall not live again in this world, he shall not live a natural mortal life again, supported in the manner it now is. And when he says of himself, that in a little time he shall

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^o Zech. i. 5.^t 1 Cor. iii. 22.^u So Noldius, p. 12. n. 80.^v See my second sermon on the Resurrection, in the second volume of the Lime-street sermons, p. 451—453.^w Job xiv. 14.

*go to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death, from whence he should not return*¹; he means, that he should return no more to his house, neither should his place know him any more², nor to a mortal state, or to the business and employments of this life; for, that being once laid in the grave, he should not rise again until the heavens be no more³; that is, until the end of the world, when there will be an universal resurrection of good and bad. Job had no scruple upon his mind about the resurrection, nor do these passages imply any; no man more firmly believed it, or more clearly asserted it. Two things are to be observed in this article;

1. That he believed he should rise with *true flesh*; *in my flesh shall I see God*. The bodies of men at the resurrection will not be airy, ethereal, or celestial bodies, destitute of flesh, blood, and bones; they will not be turned into spirits, but will be like the body of Christ after his resurrection; who said to his disciples, being terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit, *Bebold my bands and my feet, that it is I myself; bandle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*⁴. It is true, the bodies of the saints will be raised spiritual ones; they will be subject and subservient to the soul or spirit, employed in spiritual service, and delighted with spiritual objects, and live without natural helps, as spirits; but then they will not be changed into spirits, or lose their former true nature and substance. The apostle indeed says, *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*⁵; by which he means, not flesh and blood simply considered, but as either sinful or mortal, or both; therefore *this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruption must put on incorruption*.

2. That he believed he should rise with *the same body*; otherwise, he should see God, not in his own flesh, but in another's; not for himself, but for another; not with his own eyes, but with the eyes of another, *a stranger*, as the word signifies⁶; a strange body, to which he was not united, in which he never dwelt, and which he never was acquainted with before. If the *same* body is not raised, it will not be properly a resurrection; nor are the figurative phrases just, by which it is sometimes expressed, as *quicken*ing the seed sown in the earth, *awaking* out of sleep, and the like. Besides, the places from whence the dead will be summoned; the subject of the resurrection; this vile and mortal body; the several instances of resurrections past, prove the identity of raised bodies: And indeed, it is inconsistent both with the justice and goodness of God, to punish or glorify other bodies than those we carried about with us here⁷. But I proceed to;

V. The

¹ Job x. 21.² Chap. vii. 40.³ Chap. xiv. 12.⁴ Luke xxiv. 39, 40.⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 50—53.⁶ ἄλλος, extraneus a radice ἄλλος Alienari, Abalienare. Buxtorf.⁷ See these arguments at large in my second sermon on the Resurrection, in the second volume of the

V. The fifth and last article of this creed, and that is, the beatific vision of God, which Job firmly believed he should enjoy; concerning which may be observed the following things:

1. That the vision of God he believed, and expected he should have, when raised from the dead, would be a corporal one; hence he says, *In my flesh shall I see God, and mine eyes, my fleshly eyes, shall behold him.* Therefore, by God we are to understand, not God essentially considered, but God personally considered in the Son, or *God manifest in the flesh.* God will be seen through the Mediator; in heaven much of the glory of the Deity will shine through the humanity of Christ; the human nature of Christ will be a glorious object for the saints to look at. To see Christ on earth was the desire of kings and prophets. It was one of *Austin's* three wishes, which were these, to see Christ in the flesh, *Paul* in the pulpit, and *Rome* in its glory. In heaven saints will see Christ *as he is, as crowned with glory and honour;* raised to the highest dignity in the human nature, shining with the brightest majesty it is capable of: and when they are thus blessed with this delightful, desirable, and everlasting sight, they will have their wishes, and Christ his prayers answered; such as, *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.*^f I would not be understood, as though I thought this corporal sight will be all the saints will have of God; no, the intellectual vision of him, with the eyes of the mind, will be enlarged to the highest degree it is capable of, and the understanding will be everlastingly employed in such contemplations of the being, perfections, and glory of God, as are now inconceivable to us, and inexpressible by us.

2. This vision will be very distinguishing; it will be such an one as many others will not be blessed with; *mine eyes shall behold him, and not another, or a stranger.* Such who are strangers, both to themselves and Christ, are unacquainted with the new birth, know nothing of the grace of God in truth, shall never see him; *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,*^g and none but them. As a stranger does not now intermeddle with the joy of saints, so neither shall he hereafter: A stranger, an hypocrite, such an one as *Balaam, shall see him, but not now; shall behold him, but not might;*^h such may see Christ in his human nature, but not so as to enjoy his presence, and be delighted with his glory: The sight of him will throw horror into their minds, and confusion in their faces; *every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds*

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the Lime-street sermons, from p. 457 to 468, and in my first sermon, p. 398, 399, &c. I have shewn, that these words of Job are not to be understood, as they are by most Jewish, and some Christian writers, of a metaphorical, but a real resurrection; which is the true reason why I have taken no notice of it in this discourse.

^f John xvii. 24.

^g Matt. v. 8.

^h Numb. xxiv. 17.

*of the earth shall wail because of him*¹. But the sight the saints will have of Christ will be of a different kind, and produce different effects.

3. This sight will be an appropriating one; *whom I shall see for myself*, says Job; I shall see my own interest in him very clearly; this will turn to my own account; it will issue in my own pleasure and delight, profit, and advantage. Saints in the resurrection-morn, and when in heaven, will see Christ for themselves, and not for others; they will be able to appropriate him to themselves, and say, *My Lord, and my God*. Now, very often they can see him as a Saviour and a Redeemer for others, but not for themselves; they can believe for others, but not for their own souls; but in heaven they will see him for themselves, and that for ever; their *sun shall no more go down, neither shall their moon withdraw itself: The Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended*².

4. This sight will be an assimilating and transforming one. Views of Christ in the glories of his gospel, promises, and ordinances, change the saints into the same image, in some measure, in this life; how much more will clear views of him hereafter? The true reason why the saints shall be so perfectly like Christ in the other world, is, because *they shall see him as he is*.

5, and lastly, This sight is exceeding desirable, will be greatly delightful, wonderfully satisfying, and will last for ever. This is the reason why saints are so desirous of departing out of this world, and to be with Christ, that they may see his glory, and enjoy his presence, the consequence of which is fulness of joy; for if a sight of Christ by faith now, fills the soul *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, what must a sight of him do in the world above? Here *the eye is not satisfied with seeing*, but then it will be, both the eye of the body and of the mind; *as for me*, says the Psalmist, *I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness*¹. And, to conclude, this vision will be an everlasting one, free from all clouds and darkness, obscurity and imperfection, and will not suffer any interruption. The saints *shall be for ever with the Lord, and behold his glory*.

Thus have I gone through the several articles of this creed, and considered the several parts of this portion of scripture, in compliance with the request of my deceased brother, and fellow-labourer in the gospel, whose remains we shall shortly commit to the grave, in hope of the resurrection of the just. His character may now be expected from me. I shall give a brief account of him (as I am able) chiefly as the saint and minister.

It pleased God to bless him with a religious education, under parents, who cheerfully and joyfully took *the spoiling of their goods* for the cause of Christ.

When,

¹ Rev. i. 7.

² Isa. ix. 20.

¹ Psalm xvii. 15.

take notice of his excellent talent in prayer, and of that sweet and near communion he often enjoyed with God in the discharge of that work in private.

His success in the ministry was very great, he had many seals of it, both in conversion and edification; some of which went before him to glory, and others are here behind, and both will meet him in the great day of the Lord. There needs no further proof and demonstration of this, than the bare consideration of the low estate in which you, this church was, when he came among you, and the very flourishing one in which he has now left you: May it continue and increase.

His large knowledge of, and acquaintance with men and things; together with great sagacity and penetration, joined with labour and pleasure in it, fitted, and gave him an uncommon turn for business. How many will miss him for his private advice and counsels? What a loss will the churches in city and country sustain, who had a common share in his care and affections? And, how long has he been a father and a guide to you, my brethren, and myself? Have we not reason to cry as the prophet did, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!*

But while I am speaking of his great concern for the public good of the churches of Christ abroad, let me not forget to take notice of his affectionate regard to you, this church, of which he was pastor, who, of all the branches of a Redeemer's interest, lay nearest his heart, and for whom he spent his time, his talents, and his strength. And here I cannot forbear reading a passage of his, in a paper fallen into my hands since his death, and which seems to be written at a time when he was engaged in prayer and tears for you; being, as I apprehend, fearful, at that time, of some divisions among you: His words are these, "O! that my present tears might cement the hearts of my dear members " together in love, and that there might be no other contention among them, " than what might express their self-denial for the sake of Christ, and their fal- " low-members, striving together for the faith of the gospel, but not with one " another about different sentiments in matters not essential to true religion, or " the public worship of God under the gospel. O! imitate a dear Redeemer " in this self-denying, loving, and tender spirit and carriage one towards ano- " ther; this will produce peace in the church; this will yield peace in your " own souls; this will yield a comfortable reflection in the near view of death, " and an eternal world."

Notwithstanding all his attainments, gifts and usefulness, he was humble, and entertained mean and low thoughts of himself; this might be seen in his carriage to those who were inferior to him. In the above-mentioned paper I meet with some lines of his, breathing out his sense of divine grace, and his own unworthiness. "O! says he, how unworthy have I always been of such

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SERMON XXIII.

The Head of the Serpent bruised by the Seed of the Woman.

Occasioned by the Death of Mrs MARTHA GIFFORD, late Wife of
the Reverend Mr ANDREW GIFFORD, Preached January 14, 1733.

GENESIS III. 15.

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed
and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

THIS book of *Genesis* is, in order, the first of the inspired writings, and gives us an account of the first principles of all things: It informs us that the world had a beginning, and is the produce of a wise and powerful agent, and not the effect of blind chance, or owing to the confused jumbling of fortuitous atoms, contrary to the notions of many philosophers. In this we learn who the first man was; and when, and by whom the several parts of the earth were peopled: It gives us the best light into the rise of the first and early monarchies, about which there has been so much contest, and leads us into the true origin of moral evil among men; concerning which there has been so much dispute in the world. In short, it is the fountain of all sound divinity, true history and philosophy.

The three first chapters especially, are an epitome both of nature and grace, and give us, in one view, the rise, ruin, and restoration of the world. They may be considered as the *text*, on which all the following parts of scripture are the *comments and expositions*.

The first chapter furnishes us with a most divine and beautiful account of the creation, in the order of six days work; by which we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear; in which the glory of the divine power and wisdom is so abundantly manifest. We learn from hence, that the heavens and the earth were made out of nothing, and not from any pre-existent matter; that

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is pronounced, it will be necessary, before I proceed any further, to inquire, who we are to understand by it. I apprehend, that by the serpent is meant a true and real serpent, and not the mere form and likeness of one, in which the devil might appear for a time. This is evident from its being reckoned among the beasts of the field, ver. 1. from the cunning and subtlety which is there ascribed to it^b; and more especially from the nature of the curse denounced against it in my text, and in the verse before it, which is thus expressed; *And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* All which is literally true of this creature, the serpent; it is the most detestable and loathesom of all creatures; it is a reptile upon the earth; it goes upon its belly, however upright it might be before this sentence; it feeds upon what is exceeding mean; and between this and man is an irreconcileable enmity; the sight of a serpent is disagreeable to man, and the sight of a man is as abhorrent to a serpent; the serpent's gall is poison to man, and the spittle of a man is venomous to serpents. This antipathy to serpents, in the human nature, is observed to be still more strong in the female sex; and it is averred, that the bare foot of a woman pressing a serpent's head, never so little, is immediate death to it: and though this creature may, at unawares, bite the heels of men; yet man has such an advantage over it, that he can easily bruise and crush its head; which it being sensible of, is most careful to cover and hide. These are things which naturalists^c say of this creature, and, if true, shew that the curse denounced, is literally fulfilled in it; and consequently, that it was a real and proper serpent, which is here intended.

But then let it be observed, that not a mere serpent, or that only, is to be understood, but that as possessed and used by Satan as his instrument: This appears from its having a faculty of speaking; and more especially from its cunning and sophisitic way of reasoning; nor is it rational to suppose, that human nature, in its bloom and glory, should be outwitted, seduced, and overcome by a creature so very inferior to it: besides, the writings of the New Testament ascribe the seduction and ruin of man to the devil. Our Lord calls him *a murderer from the beginning*^d; and sometimes this seduction is attributed to him, under the name of *the serpent*^e: And it is easy to observe, that the Devil and Satan^f, is called *the old serpent*; to all which agree the sentiments of many of

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^b See Matthev x. 16.

^c All these instances of antipathy are observed by the learned Mr Joseph Mede, from naturalists, in his works, Book I. Disc. 39. p. 293. Vid. Franz. Hist. Animal. Part IV. c. 1. Topsel's History of Serpents, p. 604, 606. ^d John viii. 44. ^e 2 Cor. xi. 2. ^f Rev. xii. 9. & xx. 2.

*committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*¹: And who more fit to bring the first tidings of grace and salvation to fallen man, than he who was to be the GREAT PROPHET in Israel? By this means the gospel of our salvation first began to be spoken by the Lord in the garden of *Eden*, as it afterwards was in the land of *Judea*, in such a manner, and with such power and authority, as it never was before or since. Add to all this, that the paraphrases antiently used by the Jewish church, seem to incline to this sense; for the Targums of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* read the eighth verse thus: *And they heard the voice of the word of the Lord God walking in the garden, &c.* and the Jerusalem Targum reads the ninth verse after this manner: *And the Word of the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, &c.* And both *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* paraphrase the tenth verse thus: *And he said, The voice of thy Word I heard in the garden, &c.* By the Word of the Lord, they mean the essential Word, the Messiah, who walked in the garden, called to *Adam*, and whose voice he heard. Now it is the very same person that continues talking with *Adam* and *Eve*, who, in my text, directs his discourse to the serpent; nor ought it to be any objection that he is here introduced speaking of himself, under the character of *the seed of the woman*, that should bruise the serpent's head, since this is not unusual, as appears from *John* iv. 10, &c.

The principal thing designed in my text, is the victory the Messiah should obtain over Satan. The enmity put between the woman and the serpent, between his seed and hers, breaking out into open war, was to issue in an entire conquest over the serpent and his seed, in which the Messiah would interest all his people. This, and only this, could be a support to *Adam* in his present state and condition. We are not to imagine, to use the words of an ingenious modern writer², "we hear God foretelling, with great solemnity, a very trivial accident that should sometime happen in the world; that serpents would be apt to bite men by the heels, and that men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on the head. What has this trifle to do with the loss of mankind, with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin of all the glory and happiness of the creation? Great comfort it was to *Adam*, doubtless, after telling him that his days should be short, and full of misery, and his end without hope, to let him know that he should now and then knock a snake on the head; but not even that without paying dear for his poor victory, for the snake should often bite him by the heel. *Adam* surely could not understand the prophecy in this sense, though some of his sons have so understood it."

It

¹ John v. 22, 23.² Sherlock's use and intent of Prophecy, p. 70, 71.

It is certain these were not the sentiments of the old Jewish church; for the paraphrases of *Jonathan* and *Jerusalem* understand the words of the Messiah; the former of which says, “There shall be a healing for the heel in the days of the “King Messiah;” and much to the same purpose says the latter. The word נִזְבֵּן, which is rendered *it*, is one of the names of God, and is so used in *Psalm* cii. 27. *Isai.* xlviii. 12. and well agrees with Christ, who is the unchangeable, omnipotent, and eternal HE, the αὐτός, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. The work ascribed to him, which is the bruising the serpent’s head, is what no other but the Messiah was to do, or could do, and is referred to in *Psalm* cx. 6. which Psalm belongs solely to the Messiah; where it is said of him, *He shall wound the heads over many countries*; which may be rendered, *He shall wound the head over a large country*; or, *he shall wound him on the head who is over a large country*; which can be no other than Satan, the god and prince of this world. Besides, *in the volume of the book*, in κιφαλίδι β.ελίω; at the head of the book, in the beginning of it, *it is written of Christ*, that he should *do the will of God*; which was to destroy Satan, the old serpent, with his works, and deliver sinful miserable man out of his hands; and can refer to no other prophesy than this, which stands at the head and front of the Bible; from the giving forth of which the Messiah has been spoken of by the mouth of all God’s holy prophets, which have been since the world began. Nor can it be any just objection to his being the seed of the woman; that the word *seed* is a collective word, since it is often used to design a single person; as in *Gen.* iv. 25. and chap. xv. 2. and xxi. 13. From all which I conclude, that this is an intimation, and the first intimation of the Messiah, and of his work and office.

The manner in which this hint is given, is worthy of observation. It is commonly said, that these words contain the first promise of the Messiah, and of grace and salvation by him to sinful man; but it ought to be observed, that the words are not spoken to man, but to the serpent; not by way of promise to *Adam*, but by way of threatening to the devil: It is true, indeed, *Adam* was present, and heard what dropped from the lips of his Judge, which revived his fainting spirits and trembling heart, and sprung a dawn of light and joy in him, and laid a solid foundation for faith and hope, as to everlasting salvation.

These words contain a declaration of secret enmity between several parties, breaking out into open war, and the event of it.

The declaration of this mutual enmity is thus expressed: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed*; that is, “I will put “between you, and raise up among you an implacable and irreconcilable hatred, “which shall not lie secretly burning in your breasts, but shall break out into

"open acts of hostility, one against another; there shall be a perpetual war between you." Now in this battle there are two pair of combatants.

The one is the serpent and the woman; who is designed by the serpent, has been observed already: By the *woman*, cannot be meant the church, who is sometimes so called, both for her weakness and fruitfulness in her present state. Could this allegorical sense be admitted of, some passages in the twelfth chapter of the *Revelation* would serve as a proper comment on our text; particularly ver. 4, 13—15, 17.

But this mystical sense is not suitable; the text designs some certain woman literally understood, πωνή "that woman," by way of emphasis: Some say, the virgin *Mary*, that famous woman, the mother of Christ, who is said to be *made of a woman*; a woman that both was mother and virgin at one and the same time, who, for the sake of him whom she bore, is *blessed among women*; and upon that account *blessed by all generations*. But rather by this woman, we are to understand *Eve*, the wife of *Adam*, the woman that was then present, who had beguiled her husband, being seduced by the serpent; the woman into whose affections he had ingratiated himself, and with whom he had lately so familiarly conversed: This woman, seeing herself imposed on, and seduced by him, and herself and posterity ruined, is filled with hatred to him; which must be no small mortification to that proud spirit, to have the weak woman opposed, as his match.

The other pair of combatants are, the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman.

By *the seed of the serpent*, may be meant either evil angels, or wicked men, or both. Evil angels may truly be called the seed of the devil, since they are of the same nature and principles with him; they are his angels, he is the prince of them; they move at his orders, and obey his commands; and these bear not only a secret grudge, but keep up an open war against Christ and his saints. Wicked men also may properly enough be called his seed; the devil is their father, and they are his children; they imitate him, they do his works, and are called after his name, *serpents, and generation of vipers*^a. They hate Christ and his people, and persecute them that are after the Spirit. This has always been, and ever will be the case, as long as this present state of things continues.

By *the seed of the woman*, is not designed her immediate posterity, especially *Cain*; for whatever hopes she might have entertained at his birth, that she had brought forth the Messiah, the promised seed; which some conclude from her words, in chapter iv. 1. *I have gotten a man from the Lord*; which they choose to render, *I have gotten a man, the Lord*; and which *Jonathan the Targumist* paraphrases thus; "I have gotten a man, the Angel of the Lord;" I say, what-

ever

^a Matt. xxiii. 23,

ever hopes of this kind she had encouraged in herself at this time, it appeared plainly afterwards that he was of the seed of the serpent, a child of the devil. Nor by the seed of the woman are we to understand the whole world, though, it is true, that *Eve is the mother of all living*; upon which account *Adam* gave her the name of *Eve*; yet many of her natural seed and offspring are children of disobedience, who are taken and led captive by the devil at his will, and in whose minds he works effectually; whatever aversion they may have to him, as he is represented as a frightful and horrible spirit, yet they have none to him, as an impure and wicked one; they love his works, and shew themselves to be his children, and will be cursed companions with him in everlasting flames. Nor can I see any reason why the elect of God should be here called the seed of the woman; it is true, believers are called *the seed of Abraham*, in a spiritual sense, *inasmuch as they are partakers of the same faith*, and tread in the same steps of obedience: They are also called the seed of the church frequently^o; and *Jerusalem*, which is above, is said to be *the mother of them all*, because they are born in her, and nursed up at her side; but they are never called the seed of *Eve*, in any particular and distinct sense from the rest of the world; the grace by which they are regenerated, not descending to them from her by natural generation. I conclude then, that by the seed of the woman, is meant the Messiah: I have given my reasons already; it is the same seed whom God afterwards promised to *Abraham*, more clearly and distinctly, saying, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*^p; which the apostle^q *Paul* directly applies to Christ. It will not now be improper to consider in what sense Christ is called *the seed of the woman*.

Some think, he is so called because of his birth of a virgin, since he is said to be the seed of the woman, and not of the man; which agrees with what is said of Jesus, that he was *made of a woman*: But the phrase does not seem to design the miraculous conception and birth of the Messiah; at least, it was not so understood by *Eve*, if it can be thought; as some learned men are of opinion, as has been before observed, that she had entertained some hopes and faith too, that she had got the Messiah; which she could not, had she known that he was to be born of a virgin; nor does it appear that there were any intimations of this kind, at least, any clear ones, until the times of *Isaiah*, who prophesied thus, *Bebold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel*^r. It may be, this phrase, *the seed of the woman*, is only designed to express the truth of Christ's incarnation, the reality of his human nature, that he should partake of the same flesh and blood with us; and, perhaps, the peculiarity of the expression may intend his assumption of a nature, and not a person; for Christ assumed not an human person, but an human nature, which

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is

^o *Isa. xlivi. 5. and xliv. 9. and lxx. 21, &c.*^p *Gen. xxii. 16.*^q *Gal. iii. 16.*^r *Isai. vii. 14.*

is called that *holy Thing born of the virgin, the seed of Abraham*; and as here the *seed of the woman*. If Christ had taken to himself an human person, there must be two persons in him, which was the monstrous and absurd error of *Nestorius*, bishop of *Constantinople*, who lived in the fifth century, and was condemned by several councils. The human nature of Christ never subsisted of itself, which is proper to personality; it always was in union with the second person, subsisted in him, and was never separate from him since it had an existence. Besides, if Christ, as man, is a separate and distinct person, his actions and obedience, as such, would be of service to none but that single person; whereas, through Christ's assumption of an human nature in personality with himself, as the Son of God, all his actions, obedience, and sufferings as man, have a divine virtue and efficacy put into them, which renders the benefit of them communicable to as many as he pleases.

But to proceed: This phrase, *the seed of the woman*, seems to be used on purpose to comfort *Eve*, under her present sorrowful circumstances; that though she had beguiled her husband, through the seduction of the serpent, and was the cause of his, her own, and their posterity's ruin; yet one descending from her, of her seed and offspring, should avenge this wrong done her, by bruising the serpent's head, and thereby deliver her from his power, and save her with an everlasting salvation. The apostle refers to this, when he says, *And Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression, notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing*¹; which last part of the text I would chuse to render thus, *Notwithstanding she shall be saved, or there shall be salvation for her, διὰ τῆς τινογενείας, by the birth of a Son*²; that is, by the promised seed, the seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ. Take the words in the other reading, and they furnish out no good sense at all, neither with respect to temporal or eternal salvation: If they are to be understood of temporal salvation in child-bearing, this is not true; since many good women, as *Rachel*, and others, have died in child-bed; nor can they be understood in any sound sense of eternal salvation, seeing bearing of children can never be thought to be either the cause or condition, or means of that, and which, as is by a learned man rightly observed, would be small comfort to those who bear none; but read the words, as I have observed they may be read, there is a glare of gospel light in them, and give us reason to conclude, that *Eve*, who was first in the transgression, was nevertheless saved, through the Messiah, and that all other women, who believe in the same glorious person, shall be saved also. What a mortification must this be to the devil, to hear, that though he had drawn the woman into the transgression, yet she should be saved from it; that though, through his temptations,

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14.

² See Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, Part I. p. 24. 25.
and the notes of his learned editor, Mr Bedford.

temptations, she had been the cause of man's ruin, yet there should be one who would spring from her, that would be the author of salvation; and that the seed of that woman, whom he had deceived, should be the ruin of him. Now between Satan and his seed, evil angels and wicked men, on the one side, and Christ the seed of the woman, and the Head of the elect, on the other, there is a rooted enmity. The serpent and his seed hate Christ; those proud spirits could not bear that the human nature should be advanced to union with the Son of God, and be exalted above that of theirs; this is thought, by some, to be that which occasioned their apostasy from God. As soon as they had an intimation of this, they broke away from him in rage and wrath, and with a disdainful pride, left their first habitations of bliss and glory, and fell into mutiny and rebellion against their Maker, and into plots and conspiracies to hinder the salvation of man by the incarnate God; though all in vain, and to no purpose. As soon as the man Christ Jesus was born, Satan stirred up Herod to seek the young child's life to destroy it; and when he was grown up to the estate of man, he had the front to solicit him to destroy himself; he put the Jews more than once upon stoning of him, and, at last, put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him; by which means he attained his end, so as to bring him to death, though it issued in the destruction of himself. The same hatred and malice are to be observed in all his seed..

On the other hand, Christ, the seed of the woman, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity, cannot but hate all the workers of it; whose trade and business it is to commit sin: He hates Satan and all his followers, maintains a war against them, in which he is the mighty conqueror; all his enemies will fall into his hands, to whom he will say, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

This leads me to consider the issue and event of this mutual enmity, discord and war; the Messiah, the seed of the woman, shall bruise the serpent's head; and the serpent, the devil, shall bruise the Messiah's heel; a vast disparity this; great are the advantages of the one over the other. I proceed to inquire,

What may be meant by bruising the serpent's head. Perhaps, what the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, will give us some light into it, when he observes, *that forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*^a. What is expressed in metaphorical terms in my text, is, in this scripture, signified without a figure; the bruising of the serpent's head, is the destruction of the devil himself; by which must be understood, not an annihilation of his being; for though that is in the power of the woman's seed, yet he will preserve him as a monument of his wrath and vengeance,

^a Heb. ii. 14

gence, to be a tormentor of others, and to be punished himself; therefore not an annihilation of him, but a destruction of his power, authority, dominion, and works, is intended. It may be, a passage of the apostle John's may instruct us in this matter yet more clearly, when he says, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*^v. The works of the devil are sinful works, which he, in all ages, has been plotting and contriving, soliciting men unto, and engaging them in. Christ was manifested in human nature to destroy these works; that is, to put away the sins of his people, make reconciliation for them, finish them, and make an end of them by the sacrifice of himself; and thereby save them from them, and from the wrath of God, which they deserve; in doing which, he has bruised the serpent's head, and confounded a design of his, which was to involve them in all the miseries of an eternal death, from which Christ has secured them; for he has abolished death, another of the devil's works, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.

There is a threefold death, which sin is the cause of, and has introduced into the world, and which are the just wages of it, a corporal, spiritual or moral, and an eternal one; all which are, in some sense, abolished by Christ. Though his people, whilst in a state of nature, are *dead in trespasses and in sins*, yet he having procured spiritual life for them, puts it into them, preserves and secures it, so as they shall never die more, in that sense. They die, indeed, a corporal death; they are not exempted from the general decree of heaven, and lot of all men; they are *brought to death, to the house appointed for all living*. Daily instances confirm this, *Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever*^x? But then the sting of death is taken away, the curse is removed; death is not inflicted on them as a penal evil, or by way of punishment for sin, that being fully satisfied for by Christ. Death is one of the believer's privileges; it frees them from the troubles of this world, and lets them into the glories of another; wherefore, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them*^y. Nor shall they always abide under the power of death; their bodies shall be raised immortal, incorruptible, and glorious; when, being re-united to their souls, they shall be received into the everlasting kingdom and glory of Christ, and spend an endless eternity with him in joy and praise; where they shall be for ever secured from the second death, which is the eternal death; *Blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death bath no power*^z. This is all owing to Christ, *the resurrection and the life*; who says, *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall be alive; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die*^a. This is comfortable to a believer, living and dying.

Moreover,

^v 1 John iii. 8.

^x Rev. xx. 6.

^y Zech. i. 5.

^z John xi. 25, 26.

^y Rev. xiv. 13.

Moreover, by the head of the serpent, we are not to understand the devil singly and alone; but the whole posse of devils with him, even all the powers of darkness, all the fiends of the infernal lake, who came out in a body, and attacked the Lord of life and glory, the seed of the woman, the true Messiah, when he hung on the cross; at which time, he spoiled principalities and powers, *επακλυνωσας*, "unclothed them," stripped them of their armour, and left them naked and defenceless, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it^b; which, when he had done, he ascended on high; and led captivity captive.

Again, The head being the seat of power, which commands the body and the members of it, may here intend the power, authority, and dominion, which the devil, as the god of this world, has usurped over mankind; and has endeavoured to establish among them, and in which he arrived to a very great pitch in the Gentile world; as is very evident from that universal idolatry which he spread over it, and which continued there for many hundreds of years. There was scarce any sort of creature in the world, but he prevailed upon the heathens to worship, even some the most mean and contemptible; for they not only worshipped the heavens, and the host of them, the sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars, and the four elements, fire, earth, air, and water, but even fishes of the sea, fowls of the air, fourfooted beasts, and creeping things; nay, even vegetables, trees, plants, and roots, and such as leeks and onions; which made the poet^c deride them for their garden gods. Nay, the devil so far prevailed, as to obtain worship and adoration for himself, and that sometimes under^c the name

^d Colos. ii. 15.

^e Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierom, l. 3. c. 12. & l. 6. c. 26.

^f Quis nescit Volusi Bythinice qualia demens
Ægyptus portenta colat: Crocodilon adorat
Pars hæc: illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin.
Ilic cœruleos hic pifcem fluminis illic
Oppida tota canem, nemo veneratur Dianam.
Porrum & cæpe nefas violare & frangere morsu:
O sanctas Gentes, quibus hæc nascentur in hortis
Nomina.—

Juvenal. Satyr. 15.

^g Μάρτιος δὲ καὶ Φεβρουάριος λαβεῖ τὰς αφεμέτας, ἡθολογηται. οἷς τὸ παρ' αὐτῷ λεγόμενοι
Οφιούντες Θεοι, καὶ τὰς Οφιούντες. Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 41. Ed. Paris. L. Vives
in Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 14. c. 11. reports from the same Pherecydes, of whom Eusebius speaks,
that this god Ophioneus, or Serpentinus, was the prince of the demons, or devils, whom Jupiter
cast down from heaven.

name and form ^f of a serpent, or in a ^g real one, in remembrance of that which he had used as an instrument ^h to ruin mankind. In our Lord's time, Satan fancied he had such a power over the world, as to dispose of it at his pleasure; and therefore, in an insolent and audacious manner, offered the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, to Christ, if he would fall down and worship him. The sacrifices which he instituted, and which were not only impure and trifling, but cruel and barbarous; such as the sacrifices ⁱ of human creatures themselves, is a full proof of what power and authority he had over men, and how much they were devoted to him, and infatuated by him: But now his head is bruised and crushed by the seed of the woman; he has not the authority he had in the Gentile world, Christ having sent his gospel thither, has dispelled the former

^f Ipsa novissime sacra & ritus initiationis ipsius, quibus Sebadiis nomen est, testimonio esse poterunt veritati: in quibus aureus coluber in finum dimittitur consecratis, & eximitur rursus ab inferioribus partibus atque imis, Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 5. p. 203. Ed. Elmenhorst. Vid. Clement. Alex. admon. ad Gentes, p. 11. Ed. Paris. & Jul. Firmic. de error. Proph. Relig. p. 18. Ed. Oxon. & Justin. Martyr. Apolog. 2. p. 70, 71. Ed. Paris. The figure of the Egyptian god Typhon, was in this manner: His upper part was human, his lower part was in the form of a serpent; he was represented with serpents coming out of his hands, and many others wrapping themselves about his body, Chartar. Hist. Deorum, p. 186. Imag. 71. Æsculapius was also worshipped in the form of a serpent, and is called by Ovid, Phœbeius anguis, Metamorph. l. 15. fab. 50. And by Horace, Serpens Epidaurius, Serm. l. 1. Satyr. 3. who, in the shape of a snake, was brought from Epidaurus to Rome, to free the city from the pestilence. an. U. C. 462. Vid. Liv. c. 11. Brev. & Sext. Aurel. Victor. de illustr. viris, c. 25. The Genii, which belonged to any place, city, or country, were painted in the same form. Virgil. Æneid. l. 5. v. 95. & Servius in ib. p. 896. Vid. Pers. Satyr. 1. v. 113.

^g Colebant enim bestias fere omnes, quas portentorum mater Ægyptus alebat, in his & serpentes & dracunculos, quos illi Agathodæmonas vocabant. Pignorii mens. Iiac. Expos. c. 1. p 5. Osiris subsequentis caput ornat sacra serpens in tabula ita frequens, ut in mentem veniat mirari hominum soliditatem, qui a Deo opt. max. ita aberrarent, ut sordidum hoc animal venerarentur. Neque vero Ægypti tantum huic dementiæ affines. Indi enim Phœnices, Arabes, Babylonii, Poeni, Bæotii, Epirotæ, Sicyonii, Epidaurii, Romani, è nostris hæretici quidam & novi orbis in colæ huic insanæ manus dedere. Ibid. c. 3. p. 23. 24. Vid. p. 26—28. & Tomasi. Cecropii votum, p. 46, 47, 55. Serpents were sacred to Jupiter. Herodot. l. 2. c. 74. and to Æsculapius, Pausan. l. 2. p. 106, 136. and to Ceres and Minerva Chartar. Imag. Deorum, p. 100, 162.

^h Διονύσου μανιόλην οργιαζεῖσι Βακχοί. αμφαγία τεινομανας αγοτεις, καὶ τελισκεψι τας κεφανομιας των φορων, αποσιμηπον τοις οφεσιν, επολολυχοτεις Ευας. Εναν εκεινην, δι ην η πλανη παρεκολευθησει καὶ σεμειον οργιων βακχικων, οφις εγι τελεσμενθε. αυτικα γνν κατα την ακριβη των Εβεριων φωνην, το ονομα τη Ενια δασινομιον, εξμηνινται οφις η θηλεια. Clemens Alexandr. admon. ad Gentes, p. 9. Of the use of the word Eva, and the repetition of it in the Bacchanalian rites, when the idolaters appeared with serpents platted on their heads, see Virgil. Æneid. l. 6. v. 518, 519. l. 7. v. 388. Pers. Satyr. 1. v. 101, 102. and Catull. Epithal. Theetidis. Hence Bacchus is called Evius, Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode xi. v. 17.

ⁱ Vid Cæsar. Comment. l. 6. Porphy. de Abstinent. l. 2 §. 54—56. Ed. Cantabr. Minut. Fel. Octav. p. 33. Ed. Oxon. Clement. Alex. admon. ad Gentes, p. 27. Tertull. Apol. c. 9. Lactant. de fals. relig. l. 1. c. 21. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum, l. 6. c. 26.

former darkness and ignorance, which has opened their eyes to see their folly and madness, and has been the means of their shaking off the devil's yoke, of delivering them from the power of Satan, and of turning them from their idols to serve the living God.

Another way by which the devil got power and authority in the Gentile world, and which, for some time, he secured and established, was by setting up ^k oracles in many places; the most famous of which were those of ^l Jupiter Ammon in Egypt, and of Apollo, the same with ^m Apollyon, one of the names of the devil in Rev. ix. 11. at Delpbos in Greece. These seem to be set up in imitation of the oracle of God, at which the people of Israel received answers by Urim and Thummim. The responses which the Gentiles received at their oracles, were generally delivered in a dark, intricate ⁿ, and ambiguous manner, so as to be sure

^k Herodotus takes notice of several oracles among the Egyptians, where, besides that of Jupiter Ammon, were the oracles of Hercules, Apollo, Minerva, Diana and Mars, and what was had in the greatest esteem, the oracle of Latona in the city Butus, l. 2. c. 83, 152, 155. Ed. Gronov. among the Grecians, besides that of Apollo Pythias at Delphos, were the oracles of Branchidæ, or Apollo Didymæus at Miletus, of Trophonius in Labadia, and Amphiaraus in Thebes, and others at Abæ and Dodosa, l. 1. c. 46. and 2. 52. and 8. 134. The same author makes mention of the oracles of Mars and Bacchus among the Thracians, l. 7. c. 76, 111. and of several among the Ethiopians, l. 2. c. 139. Pausanias observes, that there was an oracle of Apollo Thyrkxeus at Cyaneis, upon the borders of Lycia, l. 7. p. 440. Ed. Hanov. of Mercury at Pharæ in Achaia, ibid. of Hercules Buraicus at Bura, ibid. p. 449. of Apollo Ptous at mount Ptous, near the city Acræphæum, which Herodotus, l. 8. c. 135. calls Acræphia, l. 9. p. 576. and of Bacchus in Thrace, ibid. p. 589. with others. Besides, there was an oracle at Delos, one of the islands called the Cyclades, and another at Patara in Lycia, which is a place mentioned in Acts xxii. 1. and of Apis in Egypt. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum, l. 6. c. 2.

^l Concerning which, Vid. Herodot. l. 2. c. 55. Pausan. l. 3. p. 195. Q. Curt. l. 4. c. 7.

^m They both have their names from a word which signifies to destroy, τος δ' Απολλωνα, ας απολυτια σμεν θεοσ, η απολλουρα αφ' ημεν αυτας, η απολλυτα, ταυτη τειχηκαια της προστηγοριας. Phurnautus de natura Deorum, p. 92. Ed. Gale. Macrobius, gives us the several etymologies of the name of Apollo, which, according to him, is the sun; and, among the rest, mentions this: Alii cognominatum Apollinem putant, ος απολλυτα τα ζωα. Exanimat enim & perimit animantes, cum pestem intemperie caloris immittit. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17.

'Ο Απολλων οι τα απολλων ενομαζεται.

Eustathius in Homer. Iliad. a.

ⁿ Apollo was called Λοξιας, from the intricacy and ambiguity of these oracles; Λοξω δε καπρισκιλων την χρησμων οι διδωσι, Λοξιας ανομητας, Phurnautus de natura Deorum, p. 94. Vid Schol. Aristophan. Plut. p. 2. Ed. Genev. fol. Clemen. Alexandr. Strom. l. 5. p. 556. where the same reason is given for this name. The common instances of these ambiguous responses are, that which was given to Crœsus, king of Lydia, Crœsus Halyn penetrans magnam pervertet opum vim; which left it uncertain whether he should overcome the great army of the Persians; or Cyrus, who lay on the other side of the river Halys, should conquer the army of the Lydians; also that which was delivered to Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, Aio te Aeacida Romanos, vincere posse. From whence it could

not

sure to preserve the credit of the oracle, and the good opinion of the votary. These continued in great vogue for a time; but upon the coming of Christ, *the seed of the woman*, were struck dumb; the Gentiles^{*} were sensible of it, but were ignorant of the cause. The fullest proof of the ceasing of these oracles, and the reason of it, is the application of *Augustus Caesar* to the oracle at *Delphos*, after the birth of Christ, who, when he had offered some hundreds of sacrifices, urged *Apollo* to give him an answer, who should reign after him, which was the last, as it is said, he ever uttered, and was delivered in three Greek verses to this purpose[†]: “An Hebrew child that rules the blessed gods, hath commanded “me to leave this dwelling, and go immediately to hell, from henceforward “therefore depart in silence from our altars.” It is also said[‡], that *Augustus* upon his return to *Rome*, set up an altar in the Capitol, with this inscription on it, *The altar of the first-born of God*. A very considerable instance is this of the seed of the woman’s bruising the serpent’s head, for by silencing his oracles, his power and authority were greatly diminished. Now in some sense may be said the judgment of the Gentile world, and the prince of it to be *cast out*, as he was out of his oracle-temples: We have an account of something of this kind in the *Acta* of the apostles[§], where we read, that as the apostles *went to prayer*, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination; it is in the Greek text a spirit of *Python*, the same with[¶] *Apollo*, met them, which brought her masters much gain

not be concluded whether he who was a descendant of *Iacchus* should conquer the Romans, or the Romans conquer him. Much such another oracle was that which was given out to another, Ibis, *re libis nunquam per bella peribis*; where, by placing a comma either before or after *nunquam*, the words have a different sense; and in much such a way did the old serpent impose on our first parents, when he said, Ye shall be as gods, or angels; in which sense the word is sometimes used, k. owing good and evil; where it is not certain whether he meant angels of light or darkness; most probably the latter, and that they should be like himself, and the rest of the apostate angels. See more instances of this ambiguous way of speaking, used in these oracles of the Gentiles, in Pausanias, l. 8. p. 474, 475.

[○] Vid. Ciceron. de Divinatione, l. 2. p. 1996. Ed. Gothofred. Porphyri. in Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 5. c. 16. p. 204, 205. And Plutarch. οὐ τοι εἰλεπτόλεμον χρηγράφα.

[¶] Παις Ἐβραιῶν κιθίας με, Θεοίς μακαρίσσοντιν ανασσού
Τοῦδε δυρμον προγλίσσον, καὶ αὐδην αὐθίς ικεδαί,
Δοιπον απιδίσι σιγαν εκ βαρμων ἡμετέρων.

Suidas in voce *Augustus*, Tom. I. p. 377. Ed. Kuster.

[●] Suidas in ibid. Ryckius de Capitol. Roman. c. 36. p. 427, 428.

[†] Chap. xvi. 16—18.

[‡] Apollo was called Pythius, from the coming of the people to him, to inquire of him, and consult with him about difficult matters; his oracle is called so for the same reason; Καὶ εὐρεθεὶς τὸν Διελφοῖς μαρτνον τῷ Απολλωνι, πρωστορυμασσαν Πινθίον, από τοῦ διεργού τυνες αὐθρωποντις ερχομενον τα καθ’ ιαυτον. Phurnutus de natura Deorum, p. 94. Vid. Schol. Aristoph. Plut. p. 6. Ed. Genev. This is rejected by Macrobius, Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17. He is rather called so from the Hebrew word

gain by soothsaying; to which spirit Paul turned and said, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her; and he came out of her the same hour. The old serpent not being able to stand before the seed of the woman, Christ Jesus, in the ministry of his apostles.

The power of Satan over the bodies of men in the land of Judea, was very considerable about the time of Christ's being upon earth: It was a strange and uncommon dispensation; doubtless, those frequent and numerous possessions by devils were suffered, that the Son of God might have an opportunity of giving full proof both of his Deity and Messiahship. It is certain, that *he went about, and healed all that were possessed with devils;* they were obliged to quit their habitations at his order; he dispossessed them wherever he came; they dreaded him, as their tormentor and destroyer; he turned out a legion of them at once from one man; the whole posse of them was not able to stand before him. Since those times, it is remarkable that possessions of this kind have been very rare; which shews that *the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head,* and crushed this part of his power. Christ has not only dispossessed Satan of the bodies of men by his power, but of the souls of many by his gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; has delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into his own kingdom.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews observes, that the devil had *the power of death* formerly; this may be ascribed unto him, because he introduced sin into the world, which brought in death; he tempts to sin, and then accuses of it, and terrifies for it with the fears of death; and, in the Old Testament-dispensation, he was sometimes employed by the Lord to inflict death upon offenders; he was God's executioner of it, so we read of some *who murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer*; the destroying angel, *the angel of death,* as the Jews were used to call the devil; by reason of this multitudes in that day were under a servile spirit, and, *through fear of death* in this way, *were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* But now this power of Satan's is crushed, which he

word Πῆθην, which signifies a serpent; and Apollo is said to have his name Pythius, from his killing the serpent Typhon, or Python, as appears from some verses in Homer.

Τῷ δὲ αὐτῷ καλείπουσι μηδέ μινθοῦ τελεοῦσι
Εἴ τοι ποθω κικλησκεῖται· οὐ δέ ανακλα
Πυθίους κακλιθεσιν επωνυμούσι.—

Homer. Hymn. in Apoll. v. 372—374.

Vid. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. fab. 8. Hygin. fab. 140. Hence the city of Delphos, where was the oracle of Apollo, was called Pytho, Pausan. l. 10. p. 619. The she prophet that sat on the golden Tripod, and delivered out the oracles, Pythia; the place of the oracle Pythium; and the feasts and plays instituted to the honour of Apollo, Pythii ludi & festa Pythia; vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum, l. 6. c. 2.

^t 1 Cor. x. 10.

ON THE DEATH

the serpent's head is bruised ; Christ the seed of the woman holds the keys of hell and death.

"He is called, the prince of the power of the air", because he has, or ever had, over the air in raising of his dominion and government over the rest of the world, dwelling in the territories of the air, until they receive

The dead is the seat of wisdom, by the serpent's head, and may be meant his cunning and crafty schemes, all which may be baffled and confounded by Christ, the seed of the woman. He forms a scheme to ruin all mankind, which was drawn with so much subtlety, managed with so much craft and subtilty, that it succeeded so well, as he thought all was sure; when, on a sudden, it was declared, that there was provided, who, in due time, was sent into the world, and saved us from sin, law, hell, and death. He forms another scheme to take away the life of Christ: This was so craftily laid as to succeed; but then, through the death of him, Satan, who had the power of death, is destroyed. When the gospel was carried into the Gentile world, he opposed it with all the cunning he was master of: He stirred up the greatest wits of the age against it, but all in vain; for it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; and though the apostles preached Christ crucified, to the Jews, a stumbling-block; and to the Greeks, foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; and maugre all the opposition made against their doctrines, the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations; and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Satan is still framing many devices and stratagems against the saints, and makes use of many artful wiles and methods to ensnare their souls, distress their minds, and disturb their peace; he lays many snares and temptations in their way; but Christ, the seed of the woman, as he has both an ability and a heart to succour them that are tempted, so he will never suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape; and, in a little time, as he has bruised the serpent's head under himself, so he will bruise it under the feet of his saints; they shall never more be hurt or harassed by that enemy of their souls.

In a word, the whole empire of Satan is crushed by the Messiah; he is no more the god of this world, as he was before the Messiah's coming; the prince of this world is judged, condemned, and cast out, and will still have less power than he now has, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and his name one;

which

Ephes. ii. 21.

It may now be expected that I should say something concerning the deceased, whose death has occasioned this discourse. I understand she was averse to great and long encomiums; and, for my own part, I ever had a disinclination to them: However, what I shall say in this way upon the testimony of those that knew her, I believe, is just, and to be depended on. It pleased God to call her, by his grace, very early, and to engage her heart betimes to give up herself, not only to the Lord, but to a church of Christ, by the will of God, to walk with his people in all the ordinances of the gospel; and as it was through the preaching of the doctrines of grace that she was at first wrought upon, so she ever retained a value for them, and an esteem of them. God, in his providence, indulged her with a plenty of worldly substance; but this fulness was without forgetfulness of her God, or pride and haughtiness towards her fellow-creatures. As she was of an easy temper and disposition, and in easy circumstances of life, so the former was without indolence, and the latter not without industry. She had firmness and resolution of mind, both in the affairs of religion, and in the things of life, but without obstinacy and stubbornness. She was constant and zealous in the exercise of religious duties, but without dependence on them, or ostentation in them. In her last hours, this passage of scripture I have been discoursing from, and indeed the whole chapter, were very refreshing to her, when, as she said, the adversary was very busy; but Christ, the seed of the woman, who has bruised the serpent's head, appeared to her relief, and graciously assured her, that he that comes to him, ~~be will in no wise cast out~~; and that he had loved her with an everlasting love, and therefore ~~with~~ loving-kindness had drawn her to himself; from whence there is reason to conclude a comfortable and well-grounded hope of her everlasting salvation and happiness; wherefore it becomes her relatives and friends, not to sorrow as others, ~~which have no hope~~; for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so ~~they also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him~~.

S E R M O N XXIV.

Occasioned by the Death of ELIZABETH GILL, Preached June 4, 1738.
To which is added, An Account of some of her Choice Experiences.

I T H E S S. IV. 13, 14.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

I NEED not tell you what is the occasion of my reading these words to you at this time. This is done not so much on your account as on my own. You must permit me, this afternoon, to preach rather to myself and family than to you; though I hope what may be delivered may be of some service among you also. The apostle in this chapter exhorts the Thessalonians to a diligent discharge of several duties of religion, which became their character and profession; whereby they would be serviceable to one another, please God, and adorn the doctrine of Christ Jesus. He signifies, that they needed not to be wrote unto concerning brotherly love, because they were taught of God to love one another; but it seems, it was necessary, that they should be put in mind of some principal doctrines of christianity; such as concern the state of the pious dead; the resurrection of the just; the second coming of Christ; and the everlasting glory and happiness of the saints with him; in order to alleviate their grief, mitigate their sorrow, and support their spirits, under the loss of their dear friends, or near relations. It is not to be supposed, that they were entirely ignorant of these truths; but they were much out of sight, were not taken notice of and improved by them, as they should have been on such an occasion. So hard a thing is it for us to keep the doctrines of the gospel always in view; and harder still to make use of them, and live up to them, when we most want them. What can have a greater tendency to moderate our trouble, which naturally arises from the departure of our dearest friends, than to consider, that they are laid down to rest for a while; that they are asleep, and asleep in the arms of Jesus; that they will awake in the morning of the resurrection fresh and

and cheerful; that Christ will bring them with him at his second coming, when we shall meet together again, and never part more, but *shall be for ever with the Lord?* With such words or doctrines as these, the apostle would have the persons he writes to, comfort one another under their present sorrowful circumstances. With this view he delivers what he does in the words before us, and in some following verses; and in order to pursue the same design, let us attend to,

- I. The representation the apostle gives of the state and condition of the pious dead, that they are *asleep*; and *asleep in Jesus*.
- II. The knowledge that living saints may have, and the notice they should take, of this their state and condition; *I would not have you so be ignorant, &c.*
- III. The nature, rule and measure, of that sorrow, which is to be expressed on the account of departed saints; *that ye sorrow not even as others— which have no hope.*
- IV. The comfortable assurance believers may, and should have, of the resurrection of the just, from the death and resurrection of Christ, which may serve as a proper allay of their grief and sorrow; *for if we believe, &c.*

I. It is worth our while to consider, and in our meditations a little to dwell upon the representation here given, of the state and condition of the pious dead; of those that die in Christ. As,

1. That they are *asleep*. It was in common use among the eastern nations, particularly the Hebrews, Chaldeans, and Syrians, when they spoke of their dead, to say, they were *asleep*. We have many instances of this way of speaking both in the Old and New Testament; frequently we read of such an one^a, as *David, Solomon, &c.* that he *slept with his fathers, and was buried*; that is, he died as they did, and was interred among them. This phrase is indeed sometimes promiscuously used of good and bad; as, when it is said, *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*^b; but most commonly it is applied to good men; Our friend Lazarus, says Christ, *sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep*^c; that is, he is dead, and I go to raise him from the dead: So Christ is said to be *the first-fruits of them that slept*^d, not of all mankind, but of them to whom he is an head, who are members of his body, and die in him.

Now,

^a 1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43.
^d 1 Cor. xv. 20.

^b Dan. xii. 2.

^c John xi. 11.

saints; *There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest*^b; that is, from the troublings of the wicked, whether wicked men or devils, or a wicked heart: They hear no more the cry of violence, nor feel any more the hand of the oppressor; wherefore Solomon says, *I praised the dead, or, as the Chaldee paraphraſt renders the phrase, I praised thoſe that lie down to sleep, which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive*^c. Death cures them at once of all the distempers and diseases of their bodies, and sets them free from all their pains and agonies: They that die in the Lord, or sleep in Jesus, *rest from their labours and fatigues both of body and mind, and their works do follow them*. Moreover, such as are asleep, they do not sleep always, they awake again out of sleep: So they that *sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*; particularly, those that sleep in Jesus, when he shall call unto them, they shall hear his voice, saying, *awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust*; they shall then rise immediately with the utmost pleasure, in perfect conformity to the image of Christ; which will be their great satisfaction; as the Psalmist says, *As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness*^d. Again, as the *sleep of a labouring man is sweet to him*, it refreshes nature, revives his spirits, and restores his strength; he lies down in the evening fatigued and weary, he rises in the morning brisk and cheerful, and fit for business: So the saints at the resurrection will awake out of their sleep to great advantage; the body, which is *sown in corruption*, will be *raised in incorruption*; which is *sown in dishonour*, will be *raised in glory*; which is *sown in weakness*, will be *raised in power*; and, which is *sown a natural body*, will be *raised a spiritual one*, and so fit for spiritual employment and service. Add to all this, that both sleep and death are common to all men. Sleep is necessary for man, what he cannot do without, and is a blessing of nature that all more or less enjoy. Death is become necessary for all; the *grave is the house appointed for all living*. It is the decree of heaven, that man should once die, or pass under a change that is equivalent to death; for though *we shall not all sleep*, that is, die, yet *we shall all be changed*: And though *death is the wages of sin*, and so is a curse of the law entailed upon mankind, yet to them that die in the Lord it is a blessing; the curse is removed from their death, the sting is taken out of it by Christ; *so he gives his beloved sleep*, in a different manner from the rest of men. For,

2. The pious dead are not only asleep, but *asleep in Jesus*. Some^e join the phrase *in or by Jesus* with the word *bring*, and read the sentence thus, *them that sleep, by Jesus will God bring with him*; intimating, that God will raise up the dead bodies of the saints by Christ, as God-Man and Mediator; *for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead*; and that through him

^b Job iii. 17.^c Græc. Schol. in Zanch. in loc.^d יְהִי שָׁכֵנְבָּא Eccles. iv. 2.^e Psalm xvii. 15.

he will bring them to eternal glory, and save them by him, the Lord their God, alone; by whom he resolved, determined, and appointed from all eternity, to save them. Others read the words, *them that sleep for or through Jesus*^m; that is, who die for the sake of Christ, and so restrain them to the martyrs of Jesus; who, they suppose, only will have part in the first resurrection, and are *the dead in Christ that shall rise first*, and whom God will bring along with Jesus at his second coming: But it should be observed, that the apostle in this epistle speaks of *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*ⁿ; they shall all come with him, not only the martyrs, but all the rest; wherefore I think the words are best rendered, as they are by our translators, *them that sleep in Jesus*; and it is the apostle's language elsewhere, *when they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*^o, and to be understood of all that die in the Lord, that is, who are interested in him; for we are not to limit such expressions to those who die in faith, in the lively exercise of faith on Christ. Many indeed have died in this comfortable manner, which has made their death easy to themselves, and delightful to their friends. So *David* died, as his last words testify; *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure*^p. So good old *Simeon* died in the arms of Jesus; I was just ready to say, with Jesus in his arms, expressing himself thus; *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*^q. Thus died the great apostle of the Gentiles, who, as he could say in life, *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*^r; so when the time of his departure was at hand, with the greatest cheerfulness, and with full assurance of faith declared, saying, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day*^s. But this is not always the case of God's people; some of them are in the dark in their last moments, and go from hence under a cloud, and yet go safe, and may be said to *die or sleep in Jesus*, interested in him, and in union with him, which this phrase *in Jesus* is expressive of.

Union to Christ may be considered either as secret or open. God's elect had a secret union to Christ from all eternity, for they were *chosen in him before the foundation of the world*; and were as early *blessed in him* with all spiritual blessings; grace was given to them *in him* before the world began; and on account of this union were *preserved in him* in time, notwithstanding the fall of *Adam*; were represented in him, and by him, when he was crucified and slain, when

^m Aretius, Hammond, &c. in loc.ⁿ Chap. iii. 13.^o 1 Cor. xv. 18.^p 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.^q Luke ii. 29, 30.^r 2 Tim. i. 12.^s 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

he was buried in the grave and rose again ; hence they are said to be raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus¹. Now this secret union to Christ becomes open and manifest in conversion ; I knew a man in Christ, says the apostle, above fourteen years ago², meaning himself, who was converted so many years before the time of his then writing. In this sense are we to understand those words of the same apostle, where he says, that Andronicus and Junia were in Christ before him³ ; which cannot be said of their election in Christ, and federal relation to him, which commenced together. With respect to these things, one person cannot be said to be in Christ before another ; but one man may be converted before another, and so appear to be in Christ before the other does, which is what the apostle means. Now this union is not dissolved by death ; such as are once in Christ, are always so ; they that are in him while living, are in him when they die ; and will be found in him in the resurrection-morn, and day of judgment. Those whom Christ betroths to himself, takes into a near conjugal union and relation to himself, he betroths for ever. Love is the bond of this union, and there is nothing either in life or death that can unloose it. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that has loved us ; for, adds the apostle, I am persuaded, that neither death nor life—shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord⁴. The bodies as well as the souls of the saints are united to Christ, and remain in union to him, even when they are asleep or dead ; for though death dissolves the union between soul and body, it does not dissolve the union between the body and Christ ; our bodies are the members of Christ, and continue to be so in the grave, as elsewhere ; hence whilst there, they are at rest, and in the greatest safety, being under the inspection care, and guardianship of Christ ; to whom Jehovah, the Father, has declared it as his will, that of all which he hath given him he should lose nothing, no not an y of their dust, but should raise it up again at the last day ; and by virtue of this union will the pious dead be raised. Christ is the first-fruits of them, which represents, sanctifies, and ensures the whole lump : Because he lives, who w as dead, they who are dead and sleep in him shall live also. This is what the apostle strongly argues in the words of our text, If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, then we should believe also, that them that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him ; for if the head is risen, the members shall be raised also. But let us proceed,

II. To consider the knowledge that living saints may have, and the notice that they should take, of the state and condition of them that are asleep in Jesus⁵ : I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them that are asleep. And,

I. We

¹ Ephes. ii. 6.

² 2 Cor. xiii. 2.

³ Rom. xvi. 7.

⁴ Rom. viii. 35, 37—39.

1. We may be assured that they *are*, that they are in *being*, that they do *exist*; for, though they are gone from us, they are somewhere else. We are not to consider them as non-entities, as annihilated, as reduced to nothing; because they are departed from us. It is said indeed of *Rachel*, that she was *weeping for her children*, and *refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not*^y; that is, they were not with her, they were not on earth, in the land of the living; but then it follows not, that they were not anywhere else. It is observed of *Enoch*, that *he was not*; that is, he was not on earth, conversing among men as before; he was in heaven with God, for *God took him*. Thus, though the places of our dear friends and relations, who die in the Lord, *know them no more*; though their families and acquaintance know them no more after the flesh, yet they are still in being; their souls are immortal and never die; and as soon as their bodies die, their souls return to God that gave them: as soon as these are separated from their bodies, as swift as angels can bear them away, they are carried by them into *Abraham's bosom*; they are lodged in the embraces of Christ, and continue with him in the heavenly paradise, till the last trumpet sounds, and the dead arise. Nor are their bodies, which are laid in grave, crumbled into nothing; they return indeed to the dust, but there is a wide difference between *returning to the dust*, and being reduced to *nothing*. These earthly tabernacles indeed are unpinned and taken down, and their several parts separated from each other; but then they are not utterly destroyed; and they will be put together again in a better frame and order than ever they were before; and so become fit and everlasting habitations for their souls to dwell in. The bodies of the saints are the purchase of Christ's blood, are members of his body, and the temples of the holy Ghost, and therefore can never be brought to nothing. Christ will not lose his purchase, nor any part of his fulness; nor will the Spirit of God lose his dwelling-place.

2. We should consider, and bear in mind, not only that they *are*, but that they are *asleep*, yea, *asleep in Jesus*, and so at rest and in safety. Such a view of the state of the dead serves to render death very easy and familiar to us; and to take off the horror, and those frightful apprehensions which are often entertained concerning it; for the death of a believer is but like a man's lying down on his bed at evening, where he takes a comfortable nap till the morning light, when he rises refreshed and satisfied. In this light *Job* represents it to himself and others, *Man*, says he, *lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be o more*^z; which general case of man he particularly applies to himself, and explains what he means by such expressions, saying, *If a man die, shall he live again? Yes, he shall live again; wherefore, says he, all the days of my appointed time, that is, in the grave, will I wait, with patience, until my change comes, at the time*

^y Jer. xxx. 15.

^z Job xiv. 12, 14, 15.

time of the glorious resurrection ; when thou shalt call, as one man may call up another in the morning to rise out of his bed, and attend his business, *and I will answer thee* ; I shall awake at thy call ; I shall rise at thy word of command, when I shall hear thee say, “ Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment ; ” *for thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands*, to see it raised and restored to a more glorious form than it now exists in : Hence he could say to corruption, *Thou art my father* ; to the worm, *Thou art my mother and my sister* : *And where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust*^a. This consideration of the state of the dead, as of persons asleep, and at rest, serves also to moderate our grief and sorrow for the loss of any of our friends. Very pertinently may those words be applied to our present case, which our Lord spoke to the parents of the maid he raised from the dead, and others with them ; *why make ye this ado and weep? THE DAMSEL IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH*^b. What master of a family can be uneasy at finding his family, his wife, his children, his servants, in a sound fast sleep at midnight ? May he not expect they will rise in the morning well and healthful, and ready to go about any service that may be proper for them. Sound sleep supposes healthfulness ; and in case of illness and indisposition it promises a deliverance from it ; as the disciples observed concerning Lazarus, when Christ said, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth* ; *Lord, say they, if he sleep he shall do well*^c. The saints who are fallen asleep must needs do well ; they cannot do otherwise than well, who not only sleep, but *sleep in Jesus*. Should it be asked, How shall we know that our friends died in Christ, or sleep in Jesus ? It may be replied, Did they live in Christ ? Did they live to him ? If so, they died in him, and died to him ; *for none of us, that is, of the saints, liveth to himself; and no man, of that sort, dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord*. So that from hence it may be strongly concluded, that, *whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*^d. Since therefore our life, and that of our friends, is bid with Christ in God ; though we shall die, and they are fallen asleep in Jesus, yet, *when Christ who is our and their life, shall appear, we and they shall appear with him in glory*^e.

3. It may be known, and should be considered, that the pious dead, though they are at present asleep, they will not sleep always, they will awake again, they will rise from the dead. Nothing is more certain, than that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust ; and as for the dead in Christ, they will rise first ; they will have the start of the wicked dead by the space of a thousand years. The resurrection-day is the day of the Lord ; and *one day*
will

^a Chap. xvii. 14—16.

^d Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

^b Mark v. 39.

^e Col. iii. 3, 4.

^c John xi. 12.

with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day^f. The saints will rise at the beginning of this day, in the morning of it, as soon as ever the sun of righteousness is risen, or Christ is come; *but the rest of the dead^g*, the wicked dead, shall not live again till the thousand years are finished; they will not rise till the evening of this day, towards the expiration of it; *like sleep they are laid in the grave, death shall feed on them*, and retain them under his power all this long day; and the upright, the righteous ones, who are found in Christ and his righteousness, *shall have the dominion over them in the morning^h.* Happy then are they that are the Lord's, that die in him, they will share all the glories and advantages of the resurrection to eternal life: *blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death bath no power; but they shall be priests to God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, as it serves to support the people of God under present afflictions, and when in the view of death and eternity; as it did Job, who could say, *though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me;* so it tends to assuage that grief and trouble which attend the removal of our friends from us; and for that reason should be observed and considered by us.

4. We may assure ourselves, that the saints, while their bodies are sleeping in Jesus, and before they awake in the resurrection-morn, in the mean while, during this interval, their souls are in a state of happiness: they are mixed with the spirits of just men made perfect; they are attended with, and surrounded by an innumerable company of angels; they are in the presence of, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit; *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore:* they are blessed with the vision of God, are employed in singing the hallelujahs of the lamb, enjoy the society of glorified spirits, and are in perfect peace and rest. If it should be said, how shall we know that this is the case of our departed friends? Could we be satisfied of this, we should sit easy under the loss of them; let his single question be put, is there any reason to believe the grace of God was bestowed upon them? If this is a clear point, the other is out of all doubt; or nothing is more certain than this, that to whom God gives grace he also gives glory. We may be assured of the happiness of our friends in the other world, from their having tasted that the Lord was gracious to them in this. *Vocation, justification and glorification, are inseparably connected together; whom be called, them be also justified; and whom be justified, them be also glorified^k.*

5. Add

^f 2 Pet. iii. 8.^g Rev. xx. 5, 6.^h Psalm xlii. 14.ⁱ Job xix. 26, 27.^j Rom. viii. 30.

5. Add to all these considerations one more, that in a little time we shall meet together again, and never part. Our friends are gone but a little before us; we are hastening after them as fast as the wings of time can carry us. The conduct of David is worthy of our imitation; *While the child was yet alive, says he, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell, whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me!*¹. Or should the coming of the Lord prevent our going to them, for, who knows how soon he may come? He will bring all his saints with him, and we shall have a glorious meeting with them. *Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be together with the Lord;* wherefore we should comfort one another with these words. And seeing we cannot be wholly ignorant concerning them that are asleep; yea, we may assure ourselves of their happy state and condition; let us dry up our tears, and cease sorrowing, especially in any immoderate way, and what is unbecoming our christian character. Which brings me,

III. To inquire into the nature, rule, and measure, of that sorrow, which is to be expressed on the account of the decease of our friends and relatives; *That ye sorrow not, says the apostle, even as others which have no hope.* All sorrow for them is not denied and condemned; only such as was used by others, *as the rest,* who were no christians, but unconverted Gentiles. The apostle's view is not to encourage and establish a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence, and brutal insensibility; all which are contrary to the make of human nature, and to the practice of the saints, and even of Christ and his apostles. *Abraham* came to mourn for *Sarab*, and to weep for her; *Joseph* made a mourning for his father seven days; the children of *Israel* wept for *Moses* in the plains of *Moab* thirty days; *David* lamented the death of *Saul*, *Jonathan*, and *Abner*; *Christ* wept over the grave of *Lazarus*; devout men that carried *Stephen* to his burial made great lamentation over him; and our apostle, who gives the instructions in our text, signifies concerning his friend *Eparbroditus*, who was sick nigh unto death; that if the Lord had not had mercy on him he should have had sorrow upon sorrow: But excessive, immoderate sorrow, and all the extravagant forms of it the Gentiles ran into, are here forbidden. The Jews were not allowed to mourn for their dead after the manner of the Heathens; it was a standing law in *Israel*, *Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead*^m; practices, it seems, which were used among the nations of the world: Though these people, as they were always prone to imitate the Gentiles, so they did in their forms of mourning for the dead; for as the Ro-

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¹ 2 Sam. xii. 22, 23.

^m Deut. xiv. 1.

ians had their *Praefice*, and the Grecians their *μαντραις*, so they had their נִזְבָּת “mourning women;” see *Jer.* ix. 17. who by their dishevelled hair, naked breasts, and mournful voice, moved upon the affections, produced tears from others, and set them mourning and sorrowing: Such methods as these the apostle would not have christians give into, and especially such as carried in them rather marks of distraction than of affection; such as covering themselves with mud, dirt, and filth, tearing of their mouths and cheeks, smiting their heads, breasts, and thighs; which kinds of mourning were condemned by the wiser sort of the Heathens themselves; particularly by *Cicero*^a, who pronounces them *detestable*; of this sort was the mourning of *Alexander* for his friend *Hephestion*, who, when he died, cast his armour, gold, silver, and precious garments, into the fire with him; shaved his soldiers, and pulled down the tower and walls of the city of *Ecbatana*, where he was; upon which the Heathen historian himself observes^b, that he οὐδεὶς βαρβαρός, “mourned in barbarous way,” or after the manner of the Barbarians, the more savage and uncultivated nations of the world; but these were the extravagancies, and various transports of men that had *no hope*; when their friends died, they looked upon them, as entirely lost, as no longer in being; they had no expectation of seeing, meeting, and enjoying them any more, and this drove them into those madnesses and excesses. They had no notion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; they were *without hope* of that, they looked upon it as a ridiculous principle, and judged it incredible, and so despaired of ever seeing their friends alive again: But we, who believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, should not sorrow as they did, and mourn over our friends as though they were lost, and never to be enjoyed more; this is to act contrary to our character as christians, to the doctrines of christianity, to the gospel of Christ, in which *life and immortality are brought to light*, and set in the clearest view before us. Even *Seneca* the Heathen may shame us out of such a conduct; this; who having some little notion of the immortality of the soul, and its future existence in a separate state, though none of the resurrection of the body, in a consolatory letter to *Lucilius*, on the account of the death of his friend *Laccus*, thus expresses himself^c; “The thought of deceased friends is sweet and pleasant to me; for I have enjoyed them as one that was about to lose them; and I have lost them as one that may have them again.” Had this man known and embraced the christian doctrine of the resurrection, how

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would

^a Ex hac opinione sunt illa varia & detestabilia genera lugendi, pædiores, muliebres lacerationes enarum, pectoris, scæminum, capitis percussionses, Ciceron. Tusculan. Quæst. I. 3. p. mihi, 1845.

^b Ælian, Var. Hist. I. 7. c. 8.

^c Mihi amicorum defunctorum cogitatio dulcis ac blanda est; habui enim illos tanquam amissurus misi tanquam habeam. Senec. Ep. 63.

would he have improved it to the consolation of himself and friends on such an occasion as ours? Let us not sorrow then as such who are without any knowledge of this doctrine, and hope of this blessing. This I take to be the sense of the apostle, who is not to be understood of other christians who had no hope of the spiritual and eternal welfare of their deceased friends; not but that the sorrow of those who have a good hope of the future well-being of their dear relations, must, and ought to be greatly different from that of others who have no hope at all. But the apostle is speaking of other Gentiles, who were *without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*⁴. I go on,

IV. To observe, the comfortable assurance that believers may, and should have, that the souls of their pious friends will be brought along with Christ; and that their bodies will be raised from the dead at his second coming; in which they may be confirmed by his death, and resurrection from the dead. We may hope, and should believe, that *them that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him*; that is, either Jehovah the Father will bring them with his Son, or Jehovah the Son will bring them with himself; for *the Lord our God shall come, and all the saints with him*⁵. When Christ shall move from the third heaven, where he now is in his glorified body, all the blessed spirits of men made perfect shall attend him; when he shall descend into the region of the air, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, the dead bodies of the saints that sleep in him shall awake and rise out of their dusty beds, and be re-united with their souls; when they shall proceed with Christ, at the close of that day, to the judgment of the world: For not only the twelve apostles shall be seated on twelve thrones, to judge the twelve tribes of *Israel*; and all the holy martyrs shall have thrones set for them, and judgment shall be given them; but even all the saints shall be some way or other concerned in that awful work: *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?*⁶ And when Christ has presented all his elect ones to himself as a glorious church *without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, and has taken a full view of them, he will take them up with him into the third heaven; he will introduce them into his father's house, and fix them eternally in those mansions which he has prepared for them; when he will see and enjoy with satisfaction the whole fruit of his labour, blood, and purchase, and have all his prayers and intercessions effectually answered; which have been made in such form as this, *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*⁷. Now of all this the death and resurrection of Christ are a pledge and confirmation; for if we believe

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⁴ Ephes. ii. 14.

⁵ Zech. xiv. 5.

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 2.

⁷ John xvii. 24.

that Christ died and rose again, which are things beyond all doubt and question ; these are the principal articles of the christian faith, that Christ was *delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*; then we ought to believe, that Christ will bring the saints with him, for whom he died, and raise up their dead bodies to everlasting life. He himself is risen from the dead, and has *the keys of hell and death*; he can and will unlock the graves of his people, and set them free ; he is *the resurrection and the life*; he is both the efficient and meritorious cause of the resurrection of the just : He is the first-born from the dead, and the first-fruits of them that sleep in him. His resurrection is a pledge and earnest of the saints resurrection. As sure as his dead body is raised, so sure shall theirs be raised also, and be *fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself*⁴. Since therefore, from Christ's resurrection, we may strongly conclude the resurrection of the saints ; then we ought not to sorrow as those who are without hope of it, and may firmly believe, that those of our dear friends, of whom we have good hope through grace, that they have had an experience of the grace of God, that these sleep in Jesus, and shall be brought with him, and shall come forth to the resurrection of life. And, blessed be God, this is the case before us, which has been the occasion of this discourse ; we have not only hope, but faith, even full assurance of faith, as to the truth of the work of grace upon the soul of our *dear child*. My affections will not permit me to give you an account of the ground and reason of this hope, this faith, this confidence; perhaps I may communicate it to you in another way. I find I must break off at once. Consider what has been said, and the Lord give us understanding.

⁴ Phil. iii. 21.

An ACCOUNT of some Choice Experiences of ELIZABETH GILL,
who departed this Life May 30, 1738, having entered the
Thirteenth Year of her Age.

ELIZABETH GILL, daughter of JOHN and ELIZABETH GILL, was born March 14, 1725-6. She appeared from her infancy to be a child of a sweet disposition; of great solidity and thoughtfulness; of a quick understanding, and retentive memory. She was much reserved, and greatly delighted in retirement and solitude; was not addicted to play as children usually are, and if at any time she amused herself with the innocent diversions of her age, it was not in company with the rude and vain, but with the more sober and civilized sort of children.

As she grew up, she took much delight in reading good books; such as, BUNYAN's *Pilgrims Progress*, JANEWAY's *Token for Children*, and others of the like kind; and would observe the difference there was between some children and others; how, that some as soon as they began to speak, and before they could speak plain, learned bad words, and took the name of God in vain; when others were religiously inclined, and thoughtful about a future state; of which number she earnestly desired to be. She took great notice in hearing the word, and would afterwards repeat many things to her mother. She was a diligent observer of what passed in christian conversation; and among other things remarked, that the conversion of the people of God was sometimes occasioned by dreams, which put them on close thinking about the welfare of their immortal souls. This made her greatly desire, that the like might be the means of her conversion: Accordingly, some time after she dreamed, and in her dream had a view both of heaven and hell; the smoke of the latter came out in a most dreadful manner, and greatly terrified her; when she spied, as she thought, her schoolmistress, a gracious good woman, in heaven, having some reviving drops in her bosom; thither she wanted to get, and at length did get to her; where she thought herself in a most glorious place, and happy condition. Some time after she dreamed again, that a man on horseback appeared to her in a most terrible manner, threatening to kill her; at which she thought she was not at all daunted, but quietly and cheerfully submitted to the stroke of death; when, on a sudden, she found herself in a most delightful place, where were abundance of

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of people walking to and fro ; but she observed that they took no notice of one another, nor said any thing to each other. When she awaked, she wished herself again in that pleasant place. This was about two years ago. Now, though he had had many thoughts before about a future state, after this she began to think more closely of it. This put her upon seeking and praying to God, that he would, as she expressed herself, *give her grace* ; to which she was encouraged by those words, *Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you*^a.

It pleased God now to show her her vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness, the wickedness of her heart and nature ; for notwithstanding all her solidity and sobriety, which seemed to be as it were natural to her, she thought herself one of the *wickedest creatures upon earth*. When she heard that her schoolmistress beforementioned should say of her, “ Surely that child was sanctified from the womb ; ” she thought within herself, “ Am I, Oh ! she does not know how bad I am ; what a wicked heart I have.”

A remarkable instance of her sense of sin, and the tenderness of her conscience, is well as of God’s sealing his pardoning grace to her soul, is what follows ; at a certain time her brother standing in her way, she bid him remove ; instead of doing which, he smiled at her, and gave her no answer ; upon that she says to him, “ The boy stands like a fool.” But, O ! What work did that word *fool* make in her poor conscience : She had no rest night nor day, for some time after ; until it pleased God to apply to her, whilst she was crying alone by herself, those words, *I will pardon thine iniquity, and will remember thy sins no more*^b ; which calmed her conscience, and quieted her mind.

Her desires after Christ, and an interest in him, grew very strong ; she found in her soul a very great affection for him ; she would sometimes say within herself, “ I love him ; methinks, I could hug him in my arms.” She thought it was a hard thing to come to Christ. But she sometimes hoped she had an interest in him, though she durst not say she had, for fears attended her. But on her death-bed, discoursing with her father about divine things, she dropped those appropriating words, *Christ died for me* ; which being observed by him, he said to her, “ My dear, can you say, *Christ died for you ?*” Yes, said she, “ *Christ died for me.*” Nay, one time she said, she thought she even saw Christ ; when those words were made of wonderful use to her, *for yet a little while, and that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*^c.

She had many sweet words of scripture brought home to her soul, which yielded her much spiritual refreshment. Among the rest, that portion of scripture, *I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*^d, was made very useful to her in a time of great distress ;

^a Matt. vii. 7.

^b Jer. xxxi. 34.

^c Heb. x. 37.

^d Isaiah xli. 10.

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distress ; for being in great indisposition of body, and knowing what was coming upon her, and what she must go through, was much discouraged; but those words being set home upon her heart, she was much encouraged, chearfully went through what she so much feared, and felt but little pain.

Sometimes she would be afraid, that the passages of scriptures which came to her mind did not come in a right way, and from the Spirit of God ; but were what she had heard or read, and so thought of them again. She would listen with great attention and pleasure to the people of God, when discoursing about their experience of the grace of God ; and would oftentimes observe to herself, that her case and theirs was alike, and that she felt and experienced the same things as they did ; which gave her great satisfaction.

She had a great desire after, and a wonderful esteem of the grace of humility, both in things temporal and spiritual. She admired it in others, and wished for it in herself. She desired not to have a proud look, or carriage, or to behave herself proudly, in any respect. She thought within herself, that should she live to be a woman, and God should bless her with any thing of this world, she should chuse to go neat and clean, but would not spend her money in fine cloaths ; but what she could spare would give to good people that were poor. And as to things spiritual, she was always fearful, lest any pride or vanity should appear in her : Hence she was shy of speaking of what God had done for her, lest it should seem, or be thought to arise from pride, and so be a matter of boasting. Hence she studiously affected to retire into corners, to read good books, and to desire of God to give her his grace. Frequently her bed, and time of sleep and rest, were the place and time of her serious and deepest meditations ; for then, to use her own words, she could privately speak to herself. And God did clothe her with humility, and gave her the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in his sight of great price : And to the last she entertained a mean and low opinion of herself. When it was told her, that such an one had prayed for her, and such an one had prayed for her, she would say, " What, think of me ! What, pray for me ! Such an unworthy creature as I am ! "

She expressed a very great veneration and respect for the hearing of the word, and other ordinances of the gospel. When at any time under hearing the word, she found her heart wandering after, and her thoughts diverted to other things, as she sometimes did, whereby she lost much of what was spoken, it was a grief and trouble to her. And since her illness, how has she longed to enjoy opportunities of hearing the gospel preached, which she hoped to do with more attention and profit. Her father repeating in the family one Lord's day evening the heads of a sermon he had preached that day on *Prov. viii. 34. Blessed is the man that beareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my door,* it was made

expressed her willingness to die, and her readiness to submit to the will of God; and would observe, that God sometimes makes persons willing to die before they do, which was her case; nor could she see, she said, any thing in this world that was desirable, for which she might wish to live. And if at any time she signified any desire of living, she added, it was only *for her mother's sake*, who she knew would be greatly troubled at her death. Yea, she longed to be gone, and would often pour out her soul, in private ejaculations, to her dear Lord, with whom she desired to be. Her sister once observing her lips to move, as they often would when no voice was heard, said to her, " My dear, " did you say any thing? " " No, says she, I was not speaking to you, nor " to any body else; I was speaking to my dear Lord." In this frame she continued to the last, as long as she was sensible, and on *Tuesday, May 30th*, sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, aged twelve years, two months, and sixteen days. The dream she had of the man on horseback, was a lively emblem of her death, and the manner of it. Death seems to be represented by him, at whose awful stroke she was not in the least dismayed, but quietly submitted to it; and no doubt finds herself in that delightful place she thought herself to be in then, where God has given her *places to walk among those that stand by*.

These things, with many others which cannot be perfectly recollectec, were related by her, on her death-bed, to her father and mother, with whom only she had freedom of speech about spiritual things.

One thing is very remarkable, that while she was discoursing about these matters, as she sometimes would an hour, or an hour and a half together, she was quite another person; her spirits would revive; a briskness appeared in her countenance; she seemed to have no pain; nor was the least groan or complaint heard from her all the while; nor any appearance of even weariness throughout the whole interval; and would for some time after continue better, and more cheerful, though before her agonies were very great: and she would also observe, that when she had pleasant thoughts, as she called them, she felt no pain.

• Zech. iii. 7.

S E R M O-

S E R M O N XXV.

caused by the Death of Mrs MARY FALL, late Wife of the Reverend
Mr JAMES FALL of Watford, Herts. Preached April 13, 1739.

ISAIAH XXX. 21.

— *This is the way, walk ye in it* —

HIS part of *Isaiah's* prophecy was delivered by him at a time when Sennacherib, king of *Affyria*, had invaded the land of *Judea*, and was out to besiege the city of *Jerusalem*; which struck the inhabitants with great consternation, and put them on contriving different methods for their security. Some of them thought of going down to *Egypt*, or of sending to that nation for instance, in this their time of extremity: for which they are sharply reproved in the beginning of this chapter: and are told, that *their strength was to sit still*^a, it is, to be quiet and easy, and abide in the city of *Jerusalem*; and not once think of betaking themselves elsewhere; when they might assure themselves of protection and safety: but this message from God, by the prophet, was slighted by them; *For thus saith the Lord God, the holy one of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not*^b. Wherefore they are threatened with swift ruin and destruction. But as the Lord always had a compassionate regard to his dear children, the remnant, according to the election of grace among that people; so he always took care to give out gracious promises for their relief and support in the worst of times. Accordingly it is said in the context; *And therefore will the Lord wait, that ye may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy on you*^c; he will defer the execution of his judgments; he will not stir up all wrath; but when the set time is come, he will arise and have mercy on you; *the Lord is a God of judgment*, who can do nothing but what is just and right, & every thing well and wisely; who always acts according to justice, with judgment and wisdom, and also with clemency, goodness and mercy; in which use the word judgment is sometimes used: as when the prophet says, *O Lord, treat me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing*^d. And because the Lord is, in this sense, a God of judgment, it is a great encouragement

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encouragement

^a *Isaiah xxx. 7.*

^b *Ver. 15.*

^c *Ver. 18.*

^d *Jer. x. 24.*

rageant to persons to wait for him, and trust in him; *blessed are all they that wait for him*, who place their hope and confidence in him, and not in men; who make use of no illicit methods, nor apply to others for help and assistance in time of distress; *for the people shall dwell in Zion, at Jerusalem*; that is, in safety, without fear of their enemies; *thou shalt weep no more, or not long*; be God, will be very gracious to thee, at the voice of thy cry, prayer and supplication to him; when he shall bear it, he will answer thee, sooner or later, in his own time: and though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, either now, at this present time, or hereafter, in the Babylonish captivity; yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more; or as others¹ read the words, *thy rain shall not be removed from thee*; for one and the same word² signifies both *rain* and a *teacher*; because, doctrine from the mouth of the teacher, drops like rain upon the tender herb, and as flowers on the grass; and is here to be understood of the rain of spiritual doctrine; so that the sense is much the same, and the meaning of the words this; that though the people of God should be attended with bodily afflictions, they should have spiritual consolation; and though they might have a famine of bread and water, yet not of hearing the word of the Lord. *Thine eyes shall see thy teachers*, in their proper places, doing the proper work of their office; *and thine ears shall bear a voice behind thee*, saying; *This is the way, walk ye in it*. The Lord will open thine ears to discipline, and thine heart to attend to the things spoken by him in the word of the gospel; when thou turnest out of his way, to the right hand or the left. The word being said to be *behind them*, points out their declensions and backslidings, who had said to the prophets, *get ye out of the way*; *turn aside out of the path*; *cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us*³. And it is thought by some⁴, to be an allusion to schoolmasters, who stand behind their scholars, or at their back, to guide, teach, and instruct them. Others⁵ think, the reference is to shepherds following their flocks; who, when they observe any of the sheep going out of the way, call them back; or rather, the expression seems to be borrowed from travellers; who coming to a place where are several ways, and being at a loss which to take, are inclined to turn to the right hand, or the left, when they are called to by persons behind them, at a distance from them, directing them in *the right way*⁶; and such is this here directed to.

The

¹ Calvin, Munster, &c. ² בָּשָׁר Joel ii. 23. Quod si ibi significat pluviam, metaphorice notabitur is, qui de celo descendit & irrigat ad justitiam. Coccei Lexic. in Rad. בָּשָׁר, p 339.

³ Ver. 11. ⁴ Deum vero hic paedagogum comparat, qui pueros tibi ante oculos statuit, ut eos melius formet atque regat. Calvin. in loc.

⁵ Loquitur autem ad similitudinem pastoris; qui oves aberrantes a tergo inclamans ad viam revo- cat, & illae audita voce ejus in ordinem redeunt. Musculus in loc.

⁶ So the Chaldee paraphrase explains the words, אֶת־הַמְּלֵךְ תִּמְלֹךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹן, this is the right way; with

The observation I make on the text is this: That the word of God, or gospel of Christ, is a full and sure direction to the people of God, as to the way in which they should walk.

This is the more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed¹. This is a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your paths². It is the rule of faith and practice; by which the whole walk and conversation of the saints, both in faith and holiness, is to be directed. We are to follow God and not men; the Bible, and not the doctrines and inventions of men. Though a majority may be on one side of the question, we are not to follow a multitude to do evil. All the world wondered after the beast³. Nor are riches and learning to have any influence upon us, or weight with us, to incline us one way or another; were there a rule of judgment, our Lord must have been rejected as an impostor and deceiver. Have any of the rulers, the heads and governors of the people, civil or ecclesiastical, or of the Pharisees, that learned body of men, believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed⁴; a company of poor illiterate and contemptible persons. Not the traditions of men, the productions of carnal reason, natural schemes, or philosophical quirks, are to be regarded by us, but the word of Christ: Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit; after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ⁵. Nor are education-principles to be trusted to and depended upon, without examination; nor are we to be governed by the customs of the people, which are generally vain⁶; but to the law and to the testimony, if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them⁷. We should search the scriptures⁸, as the noble Bereans did, to see whether the things spoken are so or no; for they are they which testify of Christ, of his person and offices, of his grace, blood, righteousness, sacrifice and satisfaction, and of the way of salvation by him; they are the standard to which all doctrines and practices are to be brought, and by which they are to be tried; and these contain full and sure directions with respect to both; they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works⁹. If any are at a loss about the way in which they should walk; let them examine the way-marks, the scriptures, the word of God, and gospel of Christ; let them stand in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths; Where is the good way, and walk therein¹⁰.

The method I shall take in the prosecution of this subject, will be as follows:

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I. I shall

with which agree the comments of R. Sol. Jarchi, R. David Kimchi, and R. Aben Ezra, in loc. Though the Arabic version, following the Septuagint, represents them as the words of seducers, directing to a wrong way.

¹ 2 Pet. i. 19. ² Psalm cxix. 105. ³ Rev. xiii. 3. ⁴ John vii. 48, 49.

⁵ Col. ii. 8. ⁶ Jer. x. 3. ⁷ Isai. viii. 20. ⁸ John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11.

⁹ 2 Tim. iii. 16. ¹⁰ Jer. vi. 16.

- I. I shall give some further account of *the word*, said to be *bebind*; which directs to the way in which the people of God should walk.
- II. Shew what that *way* is which this word directs to.
- III. Inquire what is meant by *walking in the way* which is exhorted to. And,
- IV. Observe some advantages which arise to persons walking in this *way*, and which may be considered as encouragements to them to walk in it.

I. I shall give some further account of the *word bebind*, which directs the saints to walk in the right way. And by this we are to understand, not *the word spoken by angels*^a; which is the law that was given to *Moses*, *by the disposition of angels*^b. When God appeared on mount *Sinai*, it was with great solemnity and majesty; *he came with ten thousands of saints*, his holy ones, the angels; *from his right hand went a fiery law*^c; which was received by those ministering spirits, and was ordained, or disposed of by them, *in the hand of a mediator*^d; which mediator was *Moses*. But though a word spoken by them, and delivered out with so much solemnity, required the strictest attention and regard; yet this is not the word intended here; for that was a *voice of words which they knew not*, *intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more*; for *they could not endure that which was commanded*^e: it was a voice of terror, and devoid of mercy; it accused of sin; pronounced men guilty; cursed them on account of it, and was a ministration of condemnation and death. But the word in our text, is the still small voice of the gospel, the voice of Christ; which his sheep hear, and are capable of distinguishing from the voice of a stranger: it is a word clothed with power, and is effectual to many great and wonderful purposes; it is a soul-shaking, and heart-breaking voice. What is said of the voice of the Lord, may, in some sense, be applied to this; *The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness*^f. This is a means not only of awakening and convincing, but also of quickening sinners, dead in trespasses and sins: *The hour is coming, and now is*, says Christ, *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live*^g; yea, it is a soul-comforting and reviving word to his people; it is *the voice of the charmers, charming exceeding wisely*^h; it allures the hearts of believers; it ravishes their souls; it raises and engages their affections, and fills their minds with inexpressible delight and pleasure; it is a voice of love, grace and mercy. This word may be considered as spoken and delivered by the ministers of Christ, who are ambassadors for him, and stand in his stead: when they preach his gospel,

^a Heb. ii. 2.

^b Acts vii. 53.

^c Deut. xxxiii. 2.

^d Gal. iii. 19.

^e Heb. xii. 19, 20.

^f Psalm xxix. 4, 5, 8.

^g John v. 25.

^h Psalm lviii. 5.

gospel; he speaks in them, and by them; so that he that hears them hears him; and he that despises them, despises him. Now this word, whether it be considered as lying in the Bible, or as spoken by Christ, or as delivered by his faithful ministers, is,

1. *The word of God.* It comes from him, was dictated by him, is the breath of the Almighty, was given forth by divine inspiration; the writers of it were moved by the holy Ghost; what is said by David of himself, is as true of all the rest of the penmen of the sacred scriptures; *the spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue*^c: so that what they wrote was not their own, but God's: yea, what our Lord Jesus Christ delivered, as the great prophet in *Israel*, was not his own, but his Father's: *The word which you hear, says he, is not mine, but the Father's which sent me*^d. And so what the true and faithful ministers of Christ preach, agreeable to the scriptures of truth, and the gospel of Christ, is to be regarded and received, *not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God*^e. And, indeed, the wonderful things which are done by it, and which can be ascribed to nothing else but the power of God going along with it, bear a testimony to it, and prove it to be his; such as quickening of dead sinners, opening blind eyes, unslopping deaf ears, softening hard hearts, subduing rebellious wills, reconciling minds which were enmity to God, to Christ, to his gospel, ordinances and people; and delivering souls out of the power of darkness, and translating them into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

2. It is *the word of truth*^b. The scriptures, in which it lies, are the *scriptures of truth*; it comes from *the God of truth*: the sum and substance of it is Christ, who is *the truth*. It is opened and applied, and men are guided into it by the *spirit of truth*. It consists of a set and chain of truths which are inseparably connected together; the principal of which lies in those words; *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*^f.

3. It is *the word of reconciliation*^g. It gives the plan and model of reconciliation, as it was drawn in the divine mind and counsel from everlasting: it points out this as the work cut out for the Messiah before he came; and acquaints us, that he assumed human nature in order to do it; and that the elect of God, even while they were enemies, were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and that he has actually, and compleatly, made peace for them *by the blood of his cross*; whence the gospel is called, *The gospel of peace, and the word preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all*^h.

4. It is *the word of righteousness*^m; not only because it teaches and engages men to live righteously and soberly, but because therein is revealed the righteousness

^a 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

^f John xiv. 24.

^g 1 Thess. ii. 13.

^h Ephes. i. 13.

^b 1 Tim. i. 15.

^k 2 Cor. v. 19.

^l Ephes. vi. 15. Acts x. 36.

^m Heb. v. 13.

A SERMON ON THE DEATH

"... even that righteousness, which Christ, who
..... us brought out for his people; which God is well pleased
..... ready respects unto them; his justice being satisfied with it, and
..... and made honourable by it; and which faith lays hold upon
..... righteousness; being pure, spotless, perfect and compleat; and
..... our source are justified from all things, from which they could not be
..... of Moses".

"... the word of life¹. It is the Spirit which giveth life; it is the means of
..... and communicating spiritual life to dead sinners, when attended with the
..... and power of Christ; it is the favour of life unto life, and also the means
..... and refreshing drooping believers; and moreover, shows the path
..... life, the way to eternal life and happiness by Christ; for life and immortality
..... are brought to light, not by the light of nature, nor by the law of Moses, but
..... through the gospel of Christ².

6. It is the word of salvation³. It brings the news of salvation by Christ; it
..... is a declaration of it; it gives an account both of the author and nature of it;
..... it describes the persons interested in it; it encourages poor souls to look to Christ
..... for it, and is the means of the application of it; it is the power of God unto sal-
..... vation, to every one that believeth⁴.

Now such a word as this which comes from God, is clothed with his autho-
..... rity, has the signature of truth upon it, and is charged with matters of the
..... greatest moment and concern; such as our reconciliation with God, our justifi-
..... cation before him, and the way of life and salvation by Christ, ought to be
..... attended to; and whatsoever that makes known unto us, enjoins on us, or
..... directs us to, should be regarded by us; which brings me,

II. To shew you what that way is which this word exhorts us to walk in. The grand and principal way is Christ; the lesser ones are the paths of doctrine and duty, and each of these we are directed to by the word behind us.

1. Christ is the chief and principal way the word directs us to walk in; yea,
..... he himself says, *I am the way*⁵. Under this head I shall endeavour to show you,
(1.) What Christ is the way unto. (2.) What a way he is.

(1.) What he is the way unto: he is the way to the Father; he is the way to
..... the covenant of grace, and to a participation and enjoyment of all the blessings
..... and promises of it. He is the way of salvation, and to heaven, and eternal
..... glory.

[1.] H — E

¹ Rom. i. 17.

² Acts xiii. 39.

³ Phil. ii. 16.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 10.

⁵ Acts xiii. 26.

⁶ Rom. i. 16.

⁷ John xiv. 6.

[1.] He is the way to the Father ; he is the Father's way to us, and our way to the Father. Jehovah the Father never took one step towards the salvation of his people out of Christ ; his thoughts about it began with him ; he possessed him in the beginning of his way of grace, before his works of old¹, of creation and providence ; all his purposes, resolutions, and determinations concerning that matter, were in him ; the whole scheme of it is according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord² : he drew the plan and model of reconciliation in him, in the counsel of peace that was held with him ; he chose his elect in him, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him ; grace was given to them in him before the world began. All fulness of grace was put into his hands as Mediator, that they might receive out of it, in all generations, grace for grace. The goings-forth of God, in the way of grace to his people, both in eternity and in time, have always been through Christ. And as he is the Father's way to us, he is our way to the Father : I am the way, says he, no man cometh unto the Father but by me ; none of all the individuals of human nature can come to him in any other way ; but through him both Jews and Gentiles have an access by one spirit unto the Father³ ; hence he is said to be able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him⁴.

There is no way to God upon the foot of the covenant of works. Man was made after the image, and in the likeness of God ; was in a state of friendship and amity with God ; was the favourite and darling of heaven ; was placed in the most delightful and fruitful spot in all the globe, and had a power to eat of every tree in the garden, excepting one ; all the creatures of the earth were subject to him, and he had all things about him for convenience and delight : But man being in honour abode not long ; sin soon separated chief friends ; man listened to the voice of the tempter, turned his back on God, and apostatized from him ; upon which he was both ashamed and afraid to appear before God, when called by him, but was obliged to it ; and after his arraignment, trial, and sentence, he was drove out of his earthly paradise ; and cherubims and a flaming sword were placed at the east of the garden, to keep the way of the tree of life ; intimating, that there was no coming to God, nor obtaining life, by the covenant of works. God is a consuming fire ; there is no drawing nigh to an absolute God, to God out of Christ : Who can engage his heart to approach unto him ? There is need of a day's-man to lay his hands on both : There is no access without a Mediator. Christ is the Mediator between God and man, typified by Jacob's ladder, which was set upon the earth, and its top reached to heaven ; he has assumed human nature, fulfilled the law, and satisfied divine justice in it, and so has removed the obstacles which were in the way of a sinner's coming to God.

He

¹ Prov. viii. 22.

² Ephes. iii. 11.

³ Ephes. ii. 18.

⁴ Heb. vii. 25.

He takes his own people, as it were, by the hand, and leads them into his Father's presence, so that they have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him^a: though they are black in themselves they are comely in him, through the perfect comeliness and righteousness he puts upon them; hence their persons are accepted in the beloved^b, and so likewise are their services; their prayers to God are odours of a sweet smelling savour, being presented to him perfumed with the incense of his mediation; their sacrifices of prayer and praise are acceptable to God through him; wherefore it is right that we should by him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name^c; especially, since,

[2.] Christ is the way to the participation and enjoyment of the blessings of the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace was made with Christ from everlasting, as the head and representative of God's elect, and for, and on the behalf of them. It was ordered in all things for God's glory, and their good, being stored with all spiritual blessings suitable for them, and ensured to them; all which were put into the hands of Christ for them. Now, though all these blessings were originally provided, laid up, and secured in this covenant by the free grace of God, yet they all come to us through the blood of Christ; hence that is called the blood of the everlasting covenant^d. Nor is there any coming at any of them but by him; thus, for instance, forgiveness of sin is a blessing of the covenant; I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, says God, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more^e: but then this comes to us through the blood of Christ; there is no pardon to be had in any other way, none to be expected from an absolute God, from God out of Christ; in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace^f. Nor can we come at it, but by him, and by saying as the poor publican did, God be merciful, I say, be propitious to me a sinner^g; or, God be merciful to me a sinner, through the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son. Justification is owing to the free grace of God, as the impulsive and moving cause of it, but then it is also by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and through the redemption^h that is in him. Adoption is a blessing of grace, provided for, and bestowed upon the elect in the covenant of grace; but inasmuch as sin threw obstacles in the way of their actual and personal enjoyment of it, Christ came and redeemed them by his blood, that they might receive the adoption of childrenⁱ. In a word, though eternal life was promised in the covenant, before the world began, by God that cannot lie, yet Christ came to procure it for us, and convey it to us; he came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly^j.

[3.] Christ

^a Ephes. iii. 12.

^b Chap. i. 6.

^c Chap. viii. 12.

^d Gal. iv. 4, 5.

^e Heb. xiii. 16.

^f Ephes. i. 7.

^g Luke xviii. 13.

^h John x. 18.

ⁱ Heb. xiii. 20.

^j Rom. iii. 34.

[3.] Christ is the way of salvation which the word of God directs us to, and the ministers of it shew unto us. He is the way of salvation which God has fixed, resolved, and determined on. God has appointed him to be his salvation unto the ends of the earth; and those which he has appointed not unto wrath, but to obtain salvation, he has appointed them to obtain it by Christ Jesus. The Lord, as he is determined to save them, he is determined to save them in this, and in no other way: *I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God; and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by berserken^k*; wherefore, though there may be many devices in a man's heart; one man may contrive one way of salvation, and another man another, nevertheless *the counsel of the Lord that shall stand^l*. This is a way agreeable to all the divine perfections; the glory of them is great in this way of salvation; here *mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other^m*. The rights and honours of God's justice and holiness are hereby secured, as well as the riches of his love, grace, and mercy, displayed. This is a way of salvation in which Satan is most grievously mortified; for it must be a great mortification to that proud spirit to have his head bruised, himself, and works destroyed, and for men to be saved by the seed of the woman; by Christ in human nature, the ruin of which nature he had contrived, and brought about. A way in which *the loftiness of man is bowed down, and the haughtiness of man is made lowⁿ*; the creature is debased, his works of righteousness laid aside, a blast is blown on all his goodliness, and *the Lord alone is exalted*. A way which is entirely suitable to a poor sinner's case, in which every thing needful for him, pardon, and cleansing, righteousness, and holiness, grace of every kind, and also glory, are provided for him. Such a way of salvation is Christ, that the vilest and chiepest of sinners have no reason to despair of it; for who-ever looks to him for it, and believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. To say no more, it is a way in which the righteous, though they are said to be *scarcely saved^o*, by reason of their afflictions, trials, and temptations, yet they are, and will be certainly *saved with an everlasting salvation*.

[4.] Christ is the way to heaven and eternal happiness. Having obtained by his blood eternal redemption for his people, he is entered into heaven as a forerunner, to take possession of it in their name, and prepare it for them. He is the great captain of salvation, who brings many sons to glory, through the Spirit's work of grace upon their souls, and by virtue of his own blood and righteousness; by the one as their meetness, and by the other as their right to their heavenly inheritance, without which none will ever see or enter into the kingdom of heaven. But I go on,

VOL. I.

^k Hosea i. 7.^l Isaiah ii. 17.

3 H

^l Prov. xix. 21.^o 1 Peter iv. 18.

2. To

Psalm lxxxv. 10.

2. To shew what *a way* Christ is : he is the *only way*, a *new and a living one*, a plain and straight *way*, a narrow one indeed, but yet safe and sure.

[1.] He is the only way. *I am*, says he, *the way*; emphatically and eminently so, the best and the only one : he is the only way to the Father ; no sinful man ever did, or could, or can, or will come to the Father, but by him ; *there is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*. He is the only way to the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it ; none ever enjoyed any of them, but in and by him : he is the alone Mediator, surety, and messenger of it ; he is the only way of salvation ; he is *the head of the corner* ; *neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*¹. It is in vain to expect it from any other person or quarter, from hills and mountains of duties, services, and works of righteousness done by us ; in him alone is the salvation of *Israel*. There never was, nor never will be, any other way of salvation to heaven, and eternal glory ; for though there may be ways which *seem right to men*, *the end thereof is death*².

[2.] Christ is a *new way* ; not newly contrived or found out, for he was *set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was*³ ; nor newly discovered, for he was made known as the *seed of the woman*⁴ to our first parents, immediately after the fall ; nor newly made use of, for he was *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*⁵, to whose blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, all the Old-Testament saints looked, and by whose grace they were saved, as we are : but he is called the *new way*, in opposition to the old way, by the covenant of works, and because he is more clearly revealed as *the way* under the gospel-dispensation ; *the holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest*, that is, so clearly, while the first tabernacle was yet standing⁶. Moreover, he may be called so, because he was lately slain, his blood was newly shed, and his sacrifice but a little while ago offered up ; he is *the new slain way*, as some render the phrase. Besides, he is the *new way*, because he is always new, and never old : he is *Jesus, the way of salvation, the same to day, yesterday, and for ever*⁷.

[3.] He is a *living way*. He is the living Mediator and Redeemer ; our way to God lies not through the sacrifices of slain beasts, of dead carcases, but through a living Saviour, who is the author both of spiritual and eternal life. He gives spiritual life to his people, to enable them to walk in himself, *the way* ; for there are none but *living persons* walk here, and he maintains that life in them, so that none in this way ever die, and *he gives unto them eternal life*. He is *the way*

¹ Acts iv. 11, 12.

² Prov. xvi. 25.

³ Heb. x. 20.

⁴ Prov. viii. 23.

⁵ Gen. iii. 15.

⁶ Rev. xiii. 8.

⁷ Heb. ix. 8.

⁸ Beza and Piscator, in Heb. x. 20.

⁹ Heb. xiii. 8.

way, the truth, and the life; that is, the true way to eternal life; and he ever lives, and continues to be this way; though he was dead, he is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and death^a.

[4.] It is a plain and straight way; a plain way, that is, to them that know him to be the way of peace. What wisdom says of her words, that *they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge*^b, is equally true of Christ, as *the way*; who is such an one, in which *wayfaring men, though fools, men of mean capacities, shall not err*^c. This is no round-about way; there are no mazes and labyrinths, no windings and turnings in it. Christ is a straight way to the Father, the direct way of salvation, a near way to heaven: *let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee*^d, to Jesus the captain of salvation, the author and finisher of faith; and so press on forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in him.

[5.] Christ is indeed a *narrow way*^e, περιπατην εσθιον, “a pressed or afflicted way;” a way strewed as it were with afflictions, attended with difficulties and distress: *all that walk in this way, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*^f, in one shape or another. They must expect tribulation in it; Christ has foretold it; none have been without it: This is a path all walk in to heaven; *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*^g. But then,

(6.) He is a safe and sure way; none ever perished, or ever will perish, in this way. It is said, *no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there*^h; that is, in safety: for though *Satan goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*ⁱ, yet he cannot devour or destroy any that are walking in Christ *the way*; and though there may be many ravenous beasts of prey, such as *principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places*, which seek to oppress the redeemed that walk here; yet though they may disturb their outward peace, they can never take away their spiritual comforts, nor deprive them of their future happiness; for, as has been already observed, the righteous though they are scarcely saved, yet they are *certainly* saved at last.

2. There are other lesser ways and paths of doctrine and duty, which agree and fall in with, and relate unto Christ the chief and principal way, which the word directs saints to walk in: *He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths*^j. And,

(1.) There is the path of doctrine, of evangelical truths, which are sometimes called *the way of the Lord*. *Apollos, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, is said to be instructed in the way of the Lord*; that is, in the doctrines

3 H 2

and

^a Rev. i. 18.

^b Prov. viii. 9.

^c Isai. xxxv. 8.

^d Prov. iv. 25.

^e Matt. vii. 14.

^f 2 Tim. iii. 12.

^g Acts xiv. 22.

^h Isai. xxxv. 9.

ⁱ 1 Pet. v. 8.

^j Isai. ii. 3.

and institutions of Christ, of which he had got some knowledge, though but small : wherefore *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, upon hearing of him, took him aside privately, and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly^k; that is, they led him more distinctly into the path of truth; by their means he became more acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel, and the truths of the christian religion. This is a way which every good man desires to walk in; he makes choice of it, and takes delight and pleasure in it. *I have chosen*, says *David*, *the way of truth*^l. Yea, it is a very agreeable and pleasing sight to such to see others walking in this path. The apostle *John* tells the elect lady, that he rejoiced greatly that he found of her children walking in truth^m; not only uprightly, and with integrity, in their lives and conversations, but in the truth of the gospel. And he expresses himself in much the same manner to *Gaius*; *I rejoiced greatly*, says he, *when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth*ⁿ. *I have no greater joy*, than to bear that my children walk in truth^o. Now it is the Spirit of God that is the guide of his people, and leads them into the way of truth : *When he, the Spirit of truth, is come*, says Christ, *he will guide you, σύνεσσιν υπας*, “ he will lead you the way,” into all truth^p; under whose guidance and direction, grace, influence and assistance, the saints are sometimes enabled to make considerable progress and advances in this way ; for *the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*^q.

(2.) There is the path of ordinances, the way of Christ's commandments ; particularly the two gospel-institutions of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*; which it is the will of Christ his people should attend unto, and walk in. Concerning which, the word gives plain directions.

The ordinance of *Baptism* our Lord himself submitted to, and so recommended it by his own example : he also clothed it with his authority, and gave commission to his disciples to practise it ; who accordingly did administer it to proper subjects, and in a proper manner. And if any persons have any doubt or hesitation in their minds about either the subjects, or mode of baptism, let them stand in the ways and see ; look up to the way-marks, the scriptures of truth, and there inquire, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein^r. Let them look over the accounts of the administration of this ordinance in the times of *John*, Christ, and his apostles : and as to the subjects of it, they will find that those who were baptized by *John*, the first administrator of this ordinance, were such as confessed their sins^s ; who being made sensible of their sins of heart and life, made an humble and ingenuous acknowledgment of them : That those who were baptized by Christ, or rather by his orders,

for

^k Acts xviii. 24—26.

^l Psalm cxix. 30.

^m 2 John, ver. 4.

ⁿ 3 John iii. 4.

^o John xvi. 13.

^p Prov. iv. 18.

^q Jer. vi. 16.

^r Matt. iii. 6.

for Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples, were such who were first made disciples by him ; that is, they were instructed in the knowledge of themselves and salvation by him ; they were taught to *deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow him.* Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John¹ ; he first made them disciples, and then baptized them, or ordered them to be baptized : That those to whom this ordinance was administered by the apostles of Christ, after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, were such who received the holy Ghost as well as they, who repented of their sins, and believed in Christ, or at least professed to do so. The instance of the eunuch is a remarkable one, to whose chariot Philip was bid to join himself, when he found him reading a passage in the prophecy of Isaiab ; from which scripture, being taken up into the chariot with him, he preached Christ to him, gave him an account of his person, offices, doctrines and ordinances, and particularly this of Baptism : and when they were come to a place of water convenient for the administration of it, the eunuch says to Philip, See, here is water, what doth binder me to be baptized ? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God² : upon which profession of his faith he baptized him. Now this man was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, a serious and devout man, and was employed in a religious way when Philip came up to him ; and yet, notwithstanding all this, he had no right to this ordinance of Christ without faith in him, and a profession of it; nor would Philip administer it to him without it. Look over all these accounts, I say, and you will find the persons now described to be the only proper subjects of baptism : nor will you be able to observe, that ever any one infant was baptized by John, by Christ, or his apostles ; or that there is either a precept or a precedent for such a practice, in all the word of God. And as to the mode of administration of this ordinance, if you have any scruple about that, look over the same accounts, and you will find that the first subjects of it were baptized in rivers, in places where was a large confluence of water, and chose for that purpose ; and that they were there baptized by immersion, or covering the whole body in water. The first that were baptized by John, were baptized in the river Jordan ; as was also our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said, when he was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water³ ; not from the water-side, but out of it ; which shews that he must have been in it ; where he was baptized, not by sprinkling, or pouring water on him, but by immersion into it ; for that he should go into the river, in order to be baptized in any other way, is not only ridiculous, but incredible. John also baptized in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water⁴ there ; a large confluence of it, fit for his purpose,

and

² John iv. 1, 2.¹ Acta viii. 36, 37.³ Matt. iii. 6, 16.⁴ John iii. 23.

and his way of administration. When *Pbilip* baptized the eunuch, it is said *they went down both into the water*^x; not the declivity of the earth, to the water-side, or bank of the river; for this little silly trifling criticism is destroyed by what the historian observes before, that *they came unto a certain water, the river Eleutherus*, as *Beza*^y conjectures: They were come to the river-side, to the bank of it, when the eunuch desired Baptism; and it being agreed to, they went down into the water itself, and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away *Pbilip*. Which circumstances clearly shew in what manner this ordinance was administered. Nor can any other mode but that of immersion answer to the primary signification of the word *βαπτίζω*; nor to the types of Baptism, *Noab's* ark, and the passing of the *Israelites* under the cloud, and in the sea; nor the end of baptism, which is to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ; nor the metaphorical baptisms of Christ's sufferings, and the extraordinary donation of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

The *Lord's Supper* is another ordinance of Christ, which he himself instituted and administered to his disciples, and ordered them to observe in remembrance of him; and which they accordingly did. The first christians were instructed in it, and taught to attend to it; and it is taken notice of, to their honour, that *they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer*^z. This is an ordinance to be performed with faith and fervency, in commemoration of the sufferings and death, sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ; and that frequently, and to be continued until the coming of Christ. And if any man has any doubt about the ordinance itself, let him consult the sacred oracles, they will direct him in this way; or about his right unto it, let him examine himself, and so let him eat^a. But besides these paths of particular ordinances, the word *behind us* directs us to,

(3.) The way of divine worship in general, both public and private. The worship of God was first personal, and then was set up in a family, in *Adam's* family; but when men increased into families, and these grew numerous, they joined together in public social acts of worship, and *began to call upon the name of the Lord*^b conjunctly, and in a public manner. When *Israel*, the people of God's choice, became a distinct nation, a tabernacle was set up by divine order, at the door of which the whole congregation was at certain times to assemble; and when they were established in the land the Lord their God gave unto them, a temple was built, whither the several tribes went up to worship the Lord in his holy mountain. Prophecies were delivered out under the Old-Testament dispensation; that the saints under the New should *call upon the name of the Lord*^c to serve him with one consent^d; which were remarkably fulfilled in the first christians,

^x Acts viii. 36, 38, 39.

^y In loc.

^z Acts ii. 42.

¹ Cor. xi. 28.

^b Gen. iv. 26.

^c Zeph. iii. 9.

tians, who met together to pray and hear the word, and were of one heart and of one soul^a; nor ought we to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching^b. There is also private worship, which should be attended; the people of God ought to meet in private together, and pray with one another; build up one another in their most holy faith, and converse together about the things of God, and their own experience. There is a family worship, which should be kept up: we ought to read the scripture, and pray in and with, and for our families; and there is also a personal, closet, secret worship, which should not be neglected: When thou prayest, says Christ, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly^c.

(4.) The path of duty, or the way of gospel conversation and holiness, is directed to by the word behind us. External holiness of life is what becomes the gospel of Christ, and ought to be followed by all the professors of it. The doctrine of the grace of God instructs them in it, and engages them to it: It teaches them how they should behave both in the world, and in the church; that they ought to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, circumspectly, not as fools but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil^d; and it directs them to walk in love towards one another, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace^e.

III. I am now to shew you what is meant by walking in this way which is here exhorted to. Walking, as it respects Christ the way, designs believing in him; to believe in the light, and to walk in the light, are one and the same thing. Believing in Christ, and walking in Christ, are terms synonymous. It is by faith believers walk in Christ: We walk by faith, says the apostle, not by sight^f. Faith is the eye of the soul which looks to Christ, and is the foot by which it goes to him, and walks in him, as it has received him^g. Walking, as it respects the other ways of doctrine and duty, signifies an embracing of them, and obedience to them; for as there is faith, and wherever it is in truth, there is and will be the obedience of faith; such as receive Christ and his gospel truly, obey from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to them^h; and are desirous of walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessⁱ. They make Christ the pattern and example, after whom they would copy, and would willingly walk, even as he walked^j. Now walking in both these senses,

I. Supposes

^a Acts iv. 31, 32.^c Heb. x. 25.^f Matt. vi. 6.^b Colos. iv. 5. Ephes. v. 15, 16.^d Ephes. v. 2. and iv. 2, 3.^g 2 Cor. v. 7..^e Colos. ii. 7.^h Rom. vi. 17.ⁱ Luke i. 6.^j 1 John ii. 6.

1. Supposes life. A dead man cannot walk, nor even stand upon his feet. Men in a state of nature are *dead in trespasses and sins*^o. Whoever *lives in pleasure*, in sinful lusts and pleasures, are *dead while they live*. There must be a principle of life implanted in them; the Spirit of life from Christ must enter into them; breath from the Almighty must come into them, as in the dry bones in *Ezekiel's vision*, ere they will stand upon their feet, walk in Christ and in his ways, believe in him, or obey him truly.

This supposes strength as well as life. There may be life where there is no strength to walk; but there can be no strength where there is no life. Men in a state of unregeneracy, as they are destitute of life, they are *without strength*¹. In this condition are God's elect, whilst unregenerate, and so they were when Christ died for them: Nor can they do any thing without him, though all things through him strengthening of them. In him are both *their righteousness and strength*; to him they look for both; and as they receive the one, so they do the other from him, whereby they are enabled to walk in him, and in his ways; and such only are capable thereof: *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them*².

3. This requires wisdom and guidance as well as strength. It is said of the wicked, that *there is no judgment in their goings*³: they are like children that have no discretion; cannot conduct themselves; they are without a true guide, rule and direction; they *walk after the flesh*, the dictates of carnal reason: and, indeed *the way of man, even of a good man, is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*⁴; the Spirit of God is his guide and director; by him his steps are ordered; he holds him by his hand; he teaches him to go, and *guideth him with his counsel*.

4. Walking denotes a progression, a going on, and forwards. It is not taking a step or two that can properly be called walking. There are some persons who take but, as it were, a step or two in religion; in the way of God: they are no sooner in, but they out again; this cannot be said to be walking in the way — nor are such who have *put their hand to the plough, and look back, fit for the kingdom of God*⁵. But true walkers in Christ are *not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe, continue to believe, go on believing in Christ walking in him, and in his truths and ordinances, to the saving of the soul; that is, until they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls*⁶.

IV. The last thing proposed, is to consider the advantages which arise to persons who walk in the way directed to; and which may be looked upon as so many encouragements thereunto. And,

I. A

^o Ephes. ii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 6.

¹ Mai. lxx. 8.

² Rom. v. 6.

³ Jer. x. 23.

⁴ Psalm lxxiv. 5.

⁵ Luke ix. 62.

⁶ Heb. x. 39. 1 Peter i. 9.

1. A man that walks in this way may be sure he is right ; he has a sure way to walk in, a sure guide that goes before him, and directs him, and a sure word of prophecy, to which he does well to take heed. And if at any time doubts concerning the way arise, he has nothing more to do, than to look up to the way-marks ; to consult the scriptures, which are ready at hand, and to hearken to the voice behind him, when he is about to turn to the right hand or the left. As it is, on the one hand, very uncomfortable to travellers, when they know not whether they are in the right road or no ; so on the other hand, it makes them go on more chearfully, and their journey more easy and pleasant, when they are satisfied they are in the right way.

2. Such are well provided for that walk in the way the word directs unto ; their bread is given them, and their waters are sure unto them. Though they pass through the valley of Baca, the valley of weeping, yet they find a well that supplies them with every thing necessary. Christ is a sun to warm, refresh, and comfort them, and a shield to protect them from all their enemies ; he gives them grace, every needful supply of it by the way, and will, at last, give them glory ; and in the mean while, *withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly in this way*.

3. Such may expect to be strengthened yet more and more ; to go from strength to strength, from one degree of it to another ; since God has promised that the righteous shall bold on his way ; and be that bath clean bands shall be stronger and stronger ; and, that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint^z ; yea, the way of the Lord itself is strength unto the upright^y. What greater encouragement can there be to walk on in this way ; and against those doubts and fears which are apt to possess the minds of poor weary travellers ?

4. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace^x. Christ himself, as the way, is pleasant to walk in, and so are all the lesser paths of doctrine and duty ; none of his commandments are grievous, his yoke is easy, and his burden light ; his tabernacles are amiable ; a day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. When he sheds abroad his love, how chearfully do believers run the way of his commandments ? When he puts his Spirit within them, to enable them to walk in his statutes, with what pleasure do they observe them ? And when he lifts up the light of his countenance, and affords his gracious presence, and fills them with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; this produces an inward, settled, and perfect peace.

5. The presence of God and Christ may be looked for by such, since it is said, *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness ; those that remember thee*

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tbee

^x Psalm lxxiv. 6, 11.

^y Job xvii. 9. Isaiah xl. 31.

^z Prov. x. 29.

^{*} Prov. iii. 17.

tbee in thy ways^a. Where is God to be met with? Or, can it be expected that God should meet with us but in Christ the way? And where is the presence of Christ to be enjoyed, as in his house, his ordinances; and in those ways his word directs unto?

6. The Lord has promised to give walking places to such persons: *This saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by^b*; meaning either among the angels or saints, and that both in this world, and in that which is to come; for they have fellowship with both, in either state: and the same shall also *walk with Christ in white^c*, in the robe of his righteousness, and in the raiment of immortality; *for they are worthy*, not through their own, but the worthiness of Christ. In a word, *as many as walk in this way, and according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God^d*.

I have now finished what I proposed, in considering this passage of scripture; which our deceased friend, in her life-time, desired might be the subject of her funeral discourse, and whose character might now be expected from me. She was, I understand, averse to encomiums on such occasions; and, for my own part, I never had any great inclination to such service, and may be very well now excused, since the deceased was an entire stranger to me; and had I been never so well acquainted with her, it would be needless to give her character among you; who so well knew her manner of life and conversation, how she behaved as a wife, a parent, friend, and neighbour; and those of you who had the happiness of a christian conversation with her, knew what an experience she had of the grace of God; what were her faith in Christ, love to him, and zeal for his cause and interest, his honour and glory.

Imperfections and infirmities belong to human nature; *there is not a just man or woman that lives, and does good, and sinneth not*. If any thing of this kind has fallen under your observation, it ought to be buried in total silence, and in everlasting oblivion: and the uses you are to make of it, for yourselves, are humility, care, and caution. But, on the other hand, *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, and do them; and the God of peace shall be with you^e*.

^a Isa. lxiv. 5.

^b Phil. iv. 8, 9.

^c Zach. iii. 7.

^d Rev. iii. 4.

^e Gal. vi. 26.

whatever are laid against them are of no avail, and can never issue in their condemnation ; *who is he that condemneth the elect of God?* that will censure or pass sentence upon them ? and if any should, what will it signify, seeing *it is Christ that died for their sins, and rose again for their justification, and is at the right hand of God,* as their advocate, and ever lives to make intercession for them. Though these things are put by way of question, they may be reduced to absolute propositions : the sense of them is, that “ there are none that can lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect to any purpose, but what will easily be set aside ; nor can any justly bring them under a sentence of condemnation, and much less execute such a sentence on them.” The whole may be comprised in the two following propositions :

- I. That no charge shall be brought against, nor any condemnation brought upon, the elect of God.
- II. That the Father’s justification of them, the Son’s dying for them, his resurrection from the dead; session at the right hand of God, and intercession on their account, are a sufficient and full security to them from all charges and condemnation whatever.

I. That no charge of any avail shall, or can be laid against, or any sentence of condemnation executed upon the elect of God. These are without spot and fault before the throne of God ; they are unblameable and unreprovable in his sight, and there is no condemnation to them. For the further explanation of this doctrine, I shall,

First, Shew who the elect of God are.

Secondly, In what sense no charge and condemnation can be upon them.

First, Who are the elect of God. These are a select number of men, who are the objects of God’s love, whom he has chosen in Christ, unto eternal life and salvation before the foundation of the world, of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, by certain ways of his own appointing, so that they are peculiarly his. It will be proper to take this account into several parts, and briefly explain them.

1. The elect of God are a select number of men, of Adam’s posterity ; for elect angels are not here meant : they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; not whole nations, churches, bodies, and communities of men, but particular persons ; they are such who are separated and set apart from the rest of mankind, and are alone, and are not reckoned among the nations : as they are redeemed and called, so they are chosen out of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues ; and though, considered by themselves, they are a great number,

er, which no man can number; yet, comparatively, they are but few, many are called, but few chosen, Matt. xx. 16.

2. They are the objects of the *love of God*, of his everlasting and unchangable love; and because they are the beloved of the Lord, therefore they are chosen by him unto salvation: so the people of *Israel* were chosen as a nation to outward privileges above all nations, not because they were *more* than others, for they were the *fewest of all people*, but because the Lord loved them, *Deut. vii. 7, 8. Elec^{tio} presupponit dilectionem*, "Election presupposes love." Love is the source and original of it: *whom God did foreknow, them he did predestinate*, as in the context; hence they are stiled *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, 1 Peter i. 2. which is to be understood not of the bare prescience of God, which reaches to all the sons of men, for then all would be the elect of God; but of such foreknowledge of them as includes in it the strongest love and affection for them; of which his choice of them to everlasting life, is a glaring instance and evidence.

3. They are *chosen in Christ*, as is expressly asserted in *Ephesians i. 4*. Christ himself, as mediator, is God's elect; he is so by way of eminency; he was first chosen and then the elect in him; he is the first-born of the election of grace; he was first conceived in the womb of election, and brought forth, and then the many brethren among whom he is the first-born; he was chosen as the head, and they as members in him: hence all grace was given to them *in him*, and they were blessed with all spiritual blessings *in him*; yea, hence it is, that they being sanctified, or set apart by God the Father in election, were preserved *in him*, notwithstanding the fall of *Adam*, and their own actual transgressions, in order to be called by grace, *Jude 1.*

4. The choice of them in Christ is *unto eternal life and salvation*; not unto external blessings and privileges, as the Israelites were, nor to any outward office, though ever so great, as that of apostleship, as *Judas the son of perdition* was; but to special grace here, and eternal glory hereafter: these are persons ordained to eternal life, vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory; they are appointed *not unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*; which he has been appointed to work out for them, has effected, and will put them into the possession of.

5. This choice of them was made before the foundation of the world, as is affirmed in *Ephesians i. 4*. The Thessalonians are said to be *chosen from the beginning*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. not from the beginning of the preaching of the gospel to them, nor from the beginning of their conversion, but from the beginning of time; or, in other words, from eternity; the phrase being the same with *from everlasting*, as appears from *Proverbs viii. 23*. This is an act, that does not commence in time, but bears date from eternity; it passed before the men who.

who are the objects of it, were born, and had done either good or evil, Rom. ix. 11.

6. It is owing to the sovereign good-will and pleasure of God, who *does all things after the counsel of his own will*: he predestinates to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will; he *has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and is gracious to whom he will be gracious*; and his election of persons to everlasting life, is an election of grace, and is strongly denied to be of works, Romans xi. 5, 6. It is irrespective of faith, holiness, or good works, as causes, motives, and conditions of it; these all follow upon it, and are fruits, effects, and evidences of it.

7. This choice of men to happiness is through certain ways and means of God's own appointing; such as *sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. which, as they are fixed in the decree of the means, have their sure and certain accomplishment. God chooses men, not because they were, or because he knew they would be, but that they might be holy; and this he secures for them; for by virtue, and in consequence of their being chosen, he sends the Spirit down into their hearts to sanctify them; and though the work of sanctification is at present imperfect, in pursuance of the divine purposes it shall be compleated. So likewise belief of the truth, or faith in Christ, who is the truth, and in every doctrine of the word of truth, relating to him, is another mean ascertained in the decree of election, and is sure by it: *as many as are ordained unto eternal life, have believed, do believe, and shall believe, in all ages of time*; and none truly believe, but such; and therefore true faith is called *the faith of God's elect*, Titus i. 1. It springs from electing grace; it is the fruit of it, it is the gift of God's grace, and is insured by it; and because of it, ~~as~~ the work of faith is begun, it shall be performed with power. Hence,

8. Persons thus chosen are peculiarly his, the elect of God, yea, they are emphatically called *his own elect*, Luke xviii. 7. They are not only his by creation; as all mankind are, but they are the people of his choice, & peculiar one; they are *elect according to his foreknowledge*, they are set apart for himself, for his own use, service and glory; they are chosen by him for his peculiar treasure. But,

Secondly, I am next to show you in what sense no charge can be laid against them, nor condemnation come to these persons.

First, No charge, no accusation of them, no crime to be alleged against them: But,

1. Is there nothing they are chargeable with? Are they in every sense clear of all crimes? Can nothing be objected to them, and laid against them? yes, many things. They are, as the descendants of Adam, chargeable with his sin; they were in him seminally, as the root and parent of mankind; they were in him

~~him~~

him federally, as their covenant-head and representative; in which he was the figure of Christ that was to come; and so they sinned in him, and were made and constituted sinners, through his disobedience; the guilt of which, is imputed to them, and they in themselves are liable to condemnation by it: they are chargeable with a corrupt nature, they bring into the world with them, being *conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity*; they are justly called *transgressors from the womb*; they are chargeable with the loss of original righteousness, and of the image of God, and with a want of conformity to the law of God; they are chargeable with a multitude of actual transgressions committed before conversion, and some with very grievous and notorious ones; not only as being *foolish, and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures*; but, as *living in malice, bateful, and hating one another*: so *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*, was guilty of injury, persecution and blasphemy; and the *Corinthians* are said to be *fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, and every thing that is bad*, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. And after conversion they are all chargeable, with many sins of thought, word, and deed; with sins of omission and commission; with daily infirmities and frequent backslidings; in many things they all offend; and their errors are so many, they cannot understand; and some of them are suffered to fall into very gross enormities, as *Noah, Lot, David, Peter, and others*. Wherefore,

2. Are there none that will rise, stand up and charge, these persons? yes, now: *their own hearts* rise up against them, and charge them; their conscience which is as a thousand witnesses, does often accuse them: there is in every man a conscience, which excuses or accuses for good or bad things done, unless where it is seared as with a red-hot iron: but this is not the case of good men, their consciences are tender; and though they are sometimes tempted to extenuate their faults; yet, at other times, they are ready to aggravate them, and put them in the worst light; and write dismal, desperate, and bitter things against themselves: likewise, they are very apt to charge one another; they are sometimes too forward this way, too inquisitive after each other's weaknesses; bear too hard upon one another for them; and are too severe and censorious: indeed, *they are not to suffer sin upon one another*; charges may be very lawfully brought, whether in a private, or in a public way, as the nature of the case requires, provided the rules of God's word are observed, and they are exhibited in a kind and tender manner, with a view to the glory of God, and the good of the person or persons charged: moreover, the men of the world are full of charges against the people of God, and traduce them oftentimes very wrongfully; as the Jews did our Lord; and as *Tertullus the orator, the apostle Paul*; and it is the common lot of the saints to go through good report and bad report; but *no weapon formed against them shall prosper*, and every

ness, are righteously appointed unto eternal condemnation ; yea, every one that believes not, and who lives and dies in impenitence and unbelief, is condemned already ; and there is a world that will be condemned at the last day ; but the elect of God, who shall condemn ? They are indeed, with the rest of mankind under the sentence of condemnation as considered in *Adam*, in whom they sinned ; and so the sentence of death passed upon them in him. They are by nature children of wrath, and deserving of it, and in their own persons commit things worthy of death ; and when they are thoroughly convinced of sin by the Spirit of God, they have the sentence of death within themselves, and say, as the Egyptians did, when their first-born were killed, *we be all dead men*, Exod. xii. 33. Whatever vain opinion they entertained of themselves before the commandment came with power into their consciences, as it did in the apostle Paul ; sin then revives, as it did in him, and they die, as to all hopes of attaining happiness by their works ; they see themselves dead in law, dead in sin : and after conversion, their hearts often smite and condemn them for sin, though *God is greater than their hearts, and knows all things* ; his own covenant-transactions and agreement with his Son ; what his Son has done, and what satisfaction he has made to his law and justice, and therefore will not condemn them. They are too apt to condemn one another : hence that advice of our Lord's, *condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned*, Luke vi. 37. The men of the world are very forward to condemn them as hypocrites, as the worst of men, and not fit to live upon the earth ; but the Lord stands at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul, Psalm cix. 31. The God of this world, as he accuses them, and stands at their right hand to resist them ; so he seeks, and calls for judgment against, and upon them, but in vain. The law is a ministration of condemnation and death to them that are under it : indeed, the elect of God are redeemed from it, and from the curse and condemnation of it ; *Christ being made a curse for them* ; and be it so ; that it should pass as many sentences of condemnation upon them, as there are sins committed by them ; for every sin deserves a sentence, yet *οὐκ ἔσται*, “there is not one condemnation to them” that are in Christ Jesus,” and redeemed by him ; not one sentence can be executed upon them : and though these may all condemn, yet neither Father, Son, nor Spirit, will condemn them : not the Father, for he justifies them ; not the Son, for he died for them ; and is the Lord their righteousness : he came not into the world to condemn the world, but that it might be saved by him ; nor the blessed Spirit, for these are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. To which may be subjoined, that these persons are loved by God with an everlasting love, which God has swore shall never depart from them : they are predestinated to eternal life, and shall be glorified ; they are in Christ, and to such there is no condemnation ; they are brought to believe in Christ, and

such have passed from death to life, and shall not come into condemnation ; they are justified by the blood of Christ, and shall be saved from wrath through him. I proceed to the other doctrinal proposition.

II. That the Father's justification of the elect, the Son's dying for them, his resurrection from the dead, his session at the right hand of God, and intercession for them, are a sufficient and full security of them from all charges and condemnation.

First, The Father's justification of them : *it is God that justifieth* ; that is, his elect : which shews the eternity of this act ; for if the elect of God, as such considered, are the objects of justification ; and these were chosen in Christ before the world began, they must be justified as early ; or otherwise it could not be always said with truth, *God justifieth the elect* : and also the specialty of this act of grace ; it belonging only to *the chosen of God, and precious* : and likewise the continuance of it ; it can never be made void ; it is inseparable with glorification, and so is a security from all charges and condemnation ; for,

1. Let it be considered whose act this is : it is God's act ; it is he that justifies ; he against whom these persons have sinned, whose law they have broken, whose justice they have affronted, whose legislative power and authority they have trampled upon ; who is *the lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy* : it is he that acquits ; and if he discharges, who can lay any thing to their charge ? Besides, he is just whilst he is the justifier of them : nor would he be just if he did not justify them ; for his justice is intirely satisfied with the righteousness of his Son, on their account ; and it would be unjust to take satisfaction of their surety for them, and yet bring charges against them : this the judge of all the earth will not do ; he always does that which is right.

2. The nature of this act of justification : it is not teaching men the way of righteousness, or how sinners may be just with God, or instructing men in the doctrine of justification, shewing the method God takes in justifying a sinner : this is what the ministers of the gospel do, who are therefore said to justify many, *Dan. xii. 3.* or, as we render it, *turn many to righteousness* : nor is it an infusion of righteousness and holiness into the hearts of men, which is no other than sanctification, and is a quite different thing ; a work of grace within, and which is imperfect, and is gradually carried on : but it is a forensic term ; by this act a man is made *rectus in curia* : it is a pronouncing him righteous, as if he had never sinned ; an acquitting him from all charges ; and is opposed to condemnation, *Romans v. 18.* and so is a security from all such things.

3. That by which God justifies : which is not the obedience of man ; nor any works of righteousness done by him : these are imperfect, and by them no man can be justified in the sight of God ; these would not be a sufficient security from

3. Through the death of Christ, the law and justice of God are fully satisfied. The law requires holiness of nature, this it has in the human nature of Christ, which is without sin ; and also perfect obedience, which it finds in Christ, who always did the things that pleased his Father ; and in case of disobedience, it requires a penalty, and which Christ, as the surety of his people, has bore by his sufferings and death ; and so the whole righteousness of the law is fulfilled by him for them ; which is a full satisfaction to the justice of God ; and therefore there is none that can condemn them.

4. Hereby the pardon of sin is procured : *without shedding of blood there is no remission* ; the blood of Christ has been shed for the remission of sins, and it is obtained by it : God, for Christ's sake, forgives all trespasses ; and delivers from going down to the pit, having found a sufficient ransom-price in the blood of his Son : nay, since the blood of Christ has been shed for this purpose, it is a point of justice and faithfulness with God to forgive sin, and cleanse from all unrighteousness ; and sin being pardoned, there can be no condemnation for it.

5. The compleat justification of God's people, is brought about by the death of Christ : justification is sometimes ascribed to the obedience of Christ ; *by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom v. 19. and sometimes to the blood of Christ, *being now justified by his blood*, ver. 9. And both are concerned in justification : the one is what is commonly called his *active* obedience ; the other his *passive* obedience ; and both together, with the holiness of his nature, are imputed for justification : his righteousness intitles to life ; and his blood, his sufferings, and death, secure from wrath to come ; and, therefore, it may well be said, with a view to Christ's dying for his people, *who is he that condemns it ?*

Thirdly, The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is another part of the security of God's elect, from all charges and condemnation, *yea, rather that is risen again*. That Christ is risen, the angels asserted ; the apostles were witnesses of it ; and so was the holy Ghost, being plentifully poured forth on the disciples as an evidence of that, and of his ascension to heaven. This is a fundamental article, which he that heartily and experimentally knows the power of, shall be saved, Rom. x. 9. and shall never enter into condemnation. For,

1. Christ rose as a conqueror over all his, and his people's enemies : *by rising he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light* ; and shewed that he had took away the sting of death, *which is sin* ; and had destroyed him that has the power of death, *which is the devil* ; and had overcome the world, and now has in his hands the keys of hell and death ; and therefore who shall condemn those for whom he died, and rose again ?

2. He rose again as a surety, having satisfied justice : he engaged as a surety for his people from all eternity ; God in strict justice, and according to his righteous law, dealt with him as such ; he awoke the sword of justice against him ; satisfaction was demanded of him, and it was given ; and both law and justice being satisfied, Christ was set free : an angel is sent to roll away the stone from the sepulchre ; he is discharged by a divine order ; it was not possible he should be held by the cords of death, both because of the dignity of his person, and the performance of his suretiship engagements ; and therefore being risen and discharged, as the surety of his people, law and justice, cannot condemn them, nor can any other.

3. He rose again as a common head and representative, and for the justification of God's elect : he stood charged with all their sins ; these being laid upon him by his Father, with his own consent, he was condemned for them ; and suffered death on account of them ; and when he rose, he was justified in the Spirit ; and acquitted from them all ; and his people were all justified in him as their public head. Just as they were crucified with him, and buried with him ; so they rose with him, and were justified together with him ; *he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25.*

4. A rather is put upon Christ's resurrection from the dead, as though it was a greater security from condemnation, than his death ; and so indeed in some sense it is : Christ's death expiated sin, finished transgression, and made an end of it ; but his resurrection has brought in the everlasting righteousness for his people : his dying, shewed that he was arrested and condemned ; and that the sentence of condemnation was executed on him ; but his resurrection, that he is discharged, and they in him : notwithstanding Christ's death, had he not rose again, they would have been in their sins ; under the power and guilt of them, and so liable to condemnation, *1 Cor. xv. 17.* But Christ being risen, he appears without sin, even sin imputed ; and so they are freed from sin, and from condemnation by it in him.

Fourthly, The session of Christ at the right hand of God, adds to the security of the saints from charges and condemnation, *who is even at the right hand of God.*

1. This includes his ascension into heaven, and his entrance there ; both which serve to strengthen this point : when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, or he triumphed over those who had led his people captive, sin, Satan, the law, and every enemy of theirs ; and therefore since these are led captive, who shall condemn them ? yea, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also ; so that though they have been rebellious, they are graciously regarded, and shall not be condemned. When he entered into heaven, he entered as their forerunner, in their name, to take possession of it, and prepare it for

for them, and has promised to come again and take them to himself, that they may enjoy it: wherefore, it is not possible that they should be condemned with the world.

2. Christ being at the right hand of God, shews, that he has done his work he came about; that he has made atonement for sin, and obtained eternal redemption; and that he has done this to satisfaction; and therefore is highly exalted by, and at the right hand of God, where he has all power in heaven and in earth; where he is above all; angels, principalities, and powers, being subject to him; and where he must sit until all enemies are put under his feet: it therefore cannot be in the power of any to condemn those for whom he died: to which may be added, that these are not only raised together with him, but they are made to sit together in heavenly places in him; and must be secure from condemnation, *Ephesians ii. 6.*

Fifthly and lastly, The intercession of Christ for those whom the Father has chosen, and he has died for, is another branch of their security from charges and condemnation: if he rebukes those that bring charges against them, as he does, who dare bring them? and if he is an advocate with the Father for them, as he is, who can condemn them? this part of Christ's work which he performs in heaven, as a priest upon his throne, is done, not by making vocal prayer, as in the days of his flesh, which does not seem necessary; nor by supplicating God, as an angry judge, which is not consistent with his state of exaltation, nor with his having made peace, by the blood of his cross; nor by litigating, or controverting a point, in the court of heaven, though he is a counsellor and an advocate: but by the appearance of his person, for his people; by the presentation of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice for them, which speak for peace, pardon, and atonement; by offering up the prayers and praises of them unto God; by declaring it as his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon them; and by applying the benefits of his death unto them; and which abundantly secure them from condemnation. For,

1. It should be considered who he is that intercedes, and what an interest he has in him with whom he intercedes: he is the Son of God who makes intercession, who can engage his heart to approach unto him; and who from the relation he stands in to God, must have an interest in him, and so have the persons for whom he intercedes; for he is his God, and their God, his Father, and their Father; wherefore his intercession cannot fail: and, whereas the consideration of Christ, the great high priest, that is passed unto the heavens being the Son of God, is an argument to hold fast a profession of faith, and to come with boldness to the throne of grace, *Heb. iv. 14, 16.* So it may be improved by faith, as a very strong one against all charges and condemnation taking place on those for whom Christ intercedes.

2. The intercession of Christ is constant; it always continues: though he was dead, he is alive, and lives for evermore; and he lives not for himself only but for others; he ever lives to make intercession: and because he is constantly employed in this work, therefore, as fast as charges are brought against his people, he removes them; by pleading for them, and shewing the falsehood or injustice of such charges; or the reason why, though true, they are not to be received; and on any attempt to condemn them, he shews reason why there is, and should be, no condemnation to them.

3. His intercession is always prevalent: he, who is the redeemer of his people, is strong; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and he pleads their cause, and thoroughly pleads it; and always carries his point; for his pleas are founded upon his propitiatory sacrifice, which is of a sweet smelling favour to God, and gives a full satisfaction to his justice; so that it has nothing to object to those on whose account it was offered up, and the virtue of it is pleaded. Christ was ever heard, when here on earth, and so he is now in heaven: whatever he asks for he has; yea, whatever is asked for in his name, is given.

4. The application of salvation is owing to the intercession of Christ, though the impetration of it is by his death; and the apostle argues from the evidence of the one to the certainty of the other; *for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*, Rom. v. 10. that is, by his interceding life: yea, the proof of Christ being able to save, is taken from his perpetual intercession; *wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25. The influence therefore which the intercession of Christ must have on the security of the saints from condemnation, is very evident.

Thus have I endeavoured to improve this passage of scripture upon the mournful occasion of the death of Mrs ANN BRINE, late member of the church of Christ in this place*, and late wife of the pastor of it; at whose request I have preached from it to you; it having been of singular use to the deceased.

It may now be expected I should say something concerning her, which will be chiefly about the gracious experience she was favoured with. She was a daughter of Mr JOHN MOOR of Northampton; an eminent preacher of the gospel, a minister of the Baptist denomination, of considerable abilities and learning, whom I had the honour to have a personal knowledge of, and acquaintance with. But though she had a religious education, her conversion, her knowledge of Christ, and experimental acquaintance with divine things, were not owing to that, but to the efficacy of divine grace: by several papers of her own writing, put into my hands, it appears, how she came by the knowledge of salvation by Christ, and

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* Near Cripplegate.

the great doctrines of the gospel; which were the support of her soul, and the foundation of her joy. These express the sight and sense she had of sin; her abhorrence and detestation of it; the view she had of the loveliness of Christ; of the necessity and suitableness of salvation by him; and how she was enabled to cast her soul on him; and trust in him for eternal life and happiness: but, among the rest, I find one paper, written little more than a year ago, when she took a review of her experience; led thereunto upon a supposition, that there were yet some very great troubles to come upon the churches and servants of Christ, she once thought had been over; which put her upon considering, how it would fare with her in such a time of trial; and what evidence she had of her being a child of God: for which purpose she observed how it had been with her of late; what was her present frame of mind and thoughts of things, and how it had been with her heretofore, and whether her former experience was from nature, or from the Spirit of God. As to the first of these, how it had been of late, and how it was with her then, her words are these: "I have often thought my spots are not the spots of God's children; I find so much sin bubbling up in my heart; so many sins of omission and commission, daily and hourly; I can say, that *in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing*; and such an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God. Sure it is not with the saints as with me! at the same time I have some secret hope, which I would not part with for all the world: at some times I have earnest desires after a full conformity to Christ, and thirstings after him. O! that I could love him more: O! that I could serve him better: O! that I found more love in me to his ways, his ordinances, and his people: but, O! wretched creature that I am; who shall deliver me from this body of sin? At some times I think I can say with the apostle, *thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, who hath given me the victory*. Those three scriptures have of late, upon various occasions, been sweet under a sense of sin, *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, Matt. viii. 2. *To whom shall I go, but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life*, John vi. 68. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower, whither the righteous run, and are safe*, Prov. xviii. 10. Though I am a vile, sinful, polluted creature, and, as I think, the most vile of all thy creatures; yet, for such, for the very chief of sinners, thou didst suffer and die, and who knows but for me? I know this, that if thou wilt, thou canst make even me clean; and though I am thus sinful, to whom can I go, but to that God against whom I have sinned? there is no help any where else; no other name given, whereby any can be saved, but the name Christ Jesus." She next proceeds to inquire, how it had been with her formerly, when God first begun to work upon her soul, and she set out in the way of religion; concerning which, she thus expresses herself: "Have I not experienced some thing
" which

" which natural men are strangers to ? O ! sure I hope I have : upon a recollection of several parts of my former experience, I was warmed, and asked myself this question ; Did this or that flow from nature ? No ; nature is averse to it. Did education produce it ? No ; for if that could have had such an effect, it might as well have produced it sooner : for it was not any particular care of my parents, at the time of my awakenings, that was a means thereof ; for some time before their care had been abated to what was usual ; and my heart more averse to God and good than ever : Did sabbaths seem before this time delightful ? and was I before convicted, instructed, edified, or comforted, by the word preached ? No ; I too well remember the quite contrary of this ; even when sabbaths were burdensome instead of delightful ; when, if I was obliged to be present, I strove to keep from giving any attention to what was delivered. Had I love for the people of God ? No ; I had an aversion to many of them ; nor did I love any for the sake of their being saints. Had I a sight and sense of sin ; of its evil nature ? No ; I thought myself as good as others that talk more : I did not know that I was poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked then : Did I taste a sweetness in the scriptures ? No ; I thought them to be only the inventions of some men, done with a design to keep others in awe. Did I ever see the absolute need of a Saviour before ? No ; I thought my own works were to save me, and reasoned thus sometimes : I have not been guilty of murder, stealing, &c. and so am in as fair a way for a better world, if any such there be, as others."

Having put these questions, and resolved them in the above manner, she rightly draws the following conclusion. " Then sure what I have met with and experienced, must be from the Spirit of God ; as conviction of sin, of its heinous and aggravated nature ; of original, as well as actual transgression ; the curse demerited by it ; the sense of my own inability to perform the thing that is good ; the discovery of my need of a Saviour ; my seeing Christ to be a sufficient, all-sufficient, and able Saviour ; my approving of him, and application to him for my Saviour ; my pressing desires towards him, as my alone and complete Saviour ; my admiration of the love of Father, Son and Spirit, manifested in the great concern of man's salvation ; my discovering the harmony and agreement ; the sublimity and sweetness of the holy scriptures ; and the effects that many sweet and precious promises set home to my soul have had on me ; my hungering and thirsting after Christ, his grace, and manifestation of his love and pardoning mercy ; my abhorring myself for all that I have done ; especially for those sins which I thought were committed against light and love ; my love to young converts ; my longing for the return of sabbaths ; the comfort I have received under the preaching of the gospel, &c. These

the rest of the surviving relations, have no reason to mourn as those without hope, since *them that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him*, and her among the rest, when you will meet, and never part more, and be for ever with the Lord.

Let what has been the subject of discourse on this sorrowful occasion, be regarded by each of us; which may serve as a direction to us, where to go for relief under all charges brought against us, either by ourselves or others; and under a sense of deserved condemnation, and especially when harrassed with the accusations of Satan, and the condemnation of our own hearts: let us apply to Christ; let us take the shield of faith, that shield which faith lays hold on, and uses to good purposes when it weilds it aright; namely, the blood, righteousness and sacrifice of Christ; his resurrection, session at God's right hand, and intercession: let us hold up, and hold forth these things, as a full answer to every charge, and as a sufficient reason, why no condemnation can come to us.

This may lead us on to observe, how much we are beholden to Christ; and of what use he is to us, as dying, rising again, ascending on high, sitting at the right hand of God, and there interceding for us: how valuable he is, and how precious he should be to us; and, particularly, what a regard we should have for his righteousness, which of itself clears from all charges, and secures from condemnation; and, therefore, it should be our chief desire, and real concern to be found *in him, not having on our own righteousness*, but his. It becomes us, and is best for us, to look to him at all times; to place our confidence in him, and fetch all our comfort from him; for if there be any consolation, it is in him; and seeing we receive so much benefit by him, we are under obligation to glorify him, with our bodies and spirits, which are his.

this was the most effectual way to have them succeed. The objects addressed are, *our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father*; two divine persons in the godhead: and seeing our Lord Jesus Christ is equally prayed unto as God our Father; and the same things are asked of him as of the Father; and the same gifts and blessings of grace are ascribed to the one as to the other; yea, he is mentioned in the address before his Father; we may conclude his perfect equality with him, and so his true and proper deity; or prayer, which is such a considerable branch of worship, would not be made to him, nor would he be placed on an equal foot with his Father, and much less be set before him. The things prayed for are, that these divine persons would comfort their hearts; with fresh discoveries of their love to them; with renewed applications of pardoning grace and mercy; with the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel; by the word and ordinances of it; and by granting them fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit, in private and in public: and also, that they would establish them *in every good word and work*; in every truth of the gospel, and in the practice of every duty. It is a good thing for a christian to have his heart established in the doctrines of grace; and it is his honour to be *stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*: and though the saints are in a firm and stable state, as being interested in everlasting love, secured in the covenant of grace, and safe in the arms of Christ; yet they have need of establishment in the present truths, that so they may *not be carried away with the error of the wicked*; and in the exercise of grace, that they may not fall from the stedfastness of their faith; and in the discharge of duty, that they be not drawn off from it. Now there is abundant reason to conclude that these petitions would be heard and answered,

1. From the characters of the persons addressed; *our Lord Jesus Christ himself*; he who is *our Lord*, not by creation only, as he is Lord of all; but by redemption, having bought us with his precious blood, and therefore are not our own, but his; and by virtue of a marriage-relation to us; he having espoused us to himself in righteousness, mercy, and loving-kindness; and therefore, is our Lord, and we should worship him: and moreover he is Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, who has saved us from our Sins, and from wrath to come, with an everlasting salvation; and is the Christ of God, anointed to be Prophet, Priest, and King, which offices he sustains and executes ~~for~~ us; and therefore may it not reasonably be concluded that whatsoever is asked of him and in his name, will be granted? The other person is *God even our Father*; not by creation merely, as he is of all men, who are his offspring, and the care of his providence; but by adoption, through Jesus Christ: he who is Christ's God is our God, and he who is Christ's Father is our Father; which relation is owing to his free:

free favour and love ; and if earthly parents are ready and willing to give good gifts to their children to the utmost of their power ; will not our heavenly Father give every good and needful thing to his children, so near and dear to him ? and which may be further concluded,

2. From the love each person bore to those for whom the petitions are presented : *which hath loved us* ; which relates both to God our Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, who have both loved us ; such *who were by nature children of wrath, enemies in their minds by wicked works* ; and were far from having any true love to God or Christ ; so far from it, that they were enmity itself unto them, and yet loved by them. Matchless, unparalleled Grace ! The Father loved them, and therefore appointed them not unto the wrath they deserved, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ ; loved them, and therefore made a covenant with them in Christ, ordered in all things and sure, full of precious promises and spiritual blessings, suited to their cases and circumstances ; loved them, and therefore made them the care and charge of his Son, put them into his hands, and laid up grace and glory for them ; loved them, and therefore sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them ; loved them, and therefore spared him not, but delivered him up into the hands of justice and death for them ; loved them, and therefore begot them again to a lively hope, and quickened them when dead in trespasses and sins ; loved them, and therefore justified them, pardoned them, and adopted them into his family, and made them heirs of himself, and joint-heirs with Christ. And our Lord Jesus Christ himself loved them with the same love his Father did, and as early ; and therefore in eternity became their surety, and espoused their persons and cause ; loved them, and therefore in time assumed their nature, bore their sorrows, took upon him their sins, and suffered for them ; loved them, and therefore gave himself an offering unto God for them ; loved them, and therefore shed his precious blood for the remission of their sins, and washed them from them in it ; loved them, and therefore is gone to prepare heaven and happiness for them, and will come again and take them to himself, that *where he is, they may be also*. Now, from persons of so much love, and who have given such strong proofs of it, what may not be expected ? And which may be still further concluded,

3. From the gifts of grace, bestowed as the fruits of such love : *and hath given us everlasting consolation* ; God is the God of comfort, and all true comfort springs from him ; Christ is the consolation of Israel, and if there is any real, solid comfort, it is in him, and comes by him, through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice ; and which is applied by the holy Spirit, through the word and ordinances, which are breasts of consolation ; and by the ministers of the gospel, who are *Barnabases*, sons of comfort ; and miserable comforters are all others

is at the Father's right hand, out of our sight; but we hope and believe that he will come again and receive us to himself; and therefore we expect him our Saviour from heaven, to raise our bodies, and change them, and make them like his own, and to re-unite them to our souls, and give us perfect happiness with him: the glories of the future state we are hoping for, are unseen realities; what eye has not seen, nor ear heard; eternal things we are looking at by Faith, and which are a support under present afflictions, are invisible; they are within the veil, into which faith enters, and gives a glimpse of; and hope follows, and waits for a clear sight and full enjoyment of.

2dly, It is of things future, things to come: present things are not the object of hope; for what are present with us, we no more hope about; we and hope ceases, which was exercised concerning them when at a distance: nor have them, are the things of this present life the only objects of hope; for *if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*^b. Our hope indeed has to do with future things in the present life; we hope for more communion with God and Christ in ordinances, and therefore wait patiently in them; we hope for further supplies of grace out of the fulness that is in Christ, and therefore wait upon him and for him; we gird up the loins of our minds, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Christ: our hope reaches beyond the grave, to a future state in another world; to the resurrection of our bodies; to our standing at the right hand of Christ; to our being justified before men and angels; to our receiving the crown of life and glory; to our admission into the everlasting kingdom; and to our being with Christ for evermore, and being *like him, and seeing him as he is*. The things we are hoping for are laid up for us to be enjoyed hereafter; we have here some pledges and foretastes now, but the main is yet to come; and therefore we keep looking for it: faith only gives those things we are hoping for a kind of subsistence, and realizes them to us; and therefore it is said to be *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*^c.

3dly, It is of things difficult to be obtained, as future salvation is; for though the righteous are certainly saved, yet *scarcely*^d, that is, with difficulty; by reason of the many corruptions, temptations, and snares in the way; and particularly by reason of afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions for Christ's sake: they come to the enjoyment of it through a strait gate and a narrow way, through many tribulations and sorrows; and these try and exercise hope. And yet,

4thly, It is of things possible; or otherwise there would be no room, nor reason for hope; nothing but black despair would ensue, and a resolution to lay aside

^b 1 Cor. xv. 19.

^c Heb. xi. 1.

^d 1 Peter iv. 18.

aside all thoughts about our happiness in another world, and to take the swing in carnal lusts and pleasures ; saying, *there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart*^c. But eternal glory and happiness being what God has prepared and promised, what is to be had through Christ, and that by sinners, even the chief of them, *there is hope in Israel concerning this swing*^d ; and the least encouragement given to a sensible sinner, hope lays hold upon ; and it improves every hint and circumstance to its own advantage ; such a soul *purses his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope*^e ; and as the possibility and probability of happiness appear to him, so in proportion his hope rises.

5thly, It is of things certain, which have a real being, and which are solid and substantial; and which not only faith is the substance of, but they are really laid up in heaven, are in the hands of Christ, and shall certainly be enjoyed; and of which the hoping christian has no reason to doubt : and there is not only a certainty in the object of hope, but there is such a firmness and stability in the grace itself, that the soul in the lively exercise of it rejoices in hope of the glory of God ; and which is so sure unto him, that he is even said to be already *saved by hope*^f.

6thly, True hope is always attended with *faith*: these two graces go together; where the one is the other is ; they are wrought by the same hand, and at the same time, in regeneration ; and are more or less exercised together ; though the one may be at some times more visible in its exercise than the other ; and there may be hope when faith is scarcely discernible ; yet faith is at the bottom, and *is the substance of things hoped for* ; and without which there would be no hope ; and some of the acts of these graces are so similar, so much like to one another, that they are scarcely to be discerned and distinguished from each other ; and therefore are put for one another : So what is called *trusting in Christ*, Eph. i. 12. is in the Greek text *hoping in Christ*; and these two are joined together in Jer. xvii. 7. I proceed,

Secondly, To shew the original of this grace, that it is of God, and a gift of his ; for this clause, *and good hope through grace*, is in connection with the words preceding, *and our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which*—
bath given both everlasting comfort and good hope. As faith, so hope, is *not of ourselves, it is the gift of God* ; and what is said of the one is true of the other, *that all men have it not*^g ! Hope is not to be found naturally in men ; nor is it in any natural man, in a man that is in a state of unregeneracy ; such may ex-

^a Jer. xviii. 12.^f Ezra x. 2.^g Lam. iii. 29.^b Rom. viii. 24.ⁱ Ephes. ii. 8. ^z Thess. iii. 2.

press it, but not experience it; it is too commonly and too profanely said, "As I hope to be saved;" when such who use the phrase know not what a good hope through grace is; it is the character of God's own people before conversion, that they are *without hope*, as well as *without God and Christ in the world*¹: This is a grace which is wrought in the soul in regeneration by the Spirit of God, and is one of his fruits; it is implanted by him, and grows up under his influence; it is through him believers wait for the hope of righteousness by faith; and it is through his power they abound in the exercise of it: No man has it till he is born again; for he is, of abounding grace, begotten to it: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*²; by which it appears, as well as from our text, that God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ have a concern in the production of a good and lively hope; that it is owing to the abundant mercy of the one, and the resurrection of the other, who was raised and glorified that our *faith and hope might be in God*³; and that it is not until a man is regenerated; whatever hope he has before, is not a lively one, and so not a good one: The gospel is the ordinary means by which it is ingenerated, and therefore may be called *the hope of the gospel*⁴; and certain it is, that the gospel being *good news*, and *glad tidings of good things*, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ, tends greatly to encourage and promote hope; its doctrines being doctrines of grace, and its promises being free, absolute, and unconditional, are calculated for this purpose, and greatly serve it; from these the heirs of promise have strong consolation, who flee to Christ and *lay hold on the hope set before them*; the promises they are heirs of, and which yield them comfort, encourage their hope in Christ, who is set before them, in the gospel, as the object of it; and, generally speaking, it is a word of promise which the holy Spirit brings home and applies to the Soul, which is the ground and foundation of its hope: Hence says David, *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope*⁵. Indeed whatsoever is written in the scriptures is written for our use, profit, and learning, *that we through comfort of them might have hope*⁶; and there are many things which, under a divine blessing, serve to cultivate and increase this grace; as the consideration of the power and faithfulness of God in his promises; the free grace and mercy of God displayed in salvation by Christ; the sufferings, death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ; and present experiences and a recollection of past ones; for *experience worketh hope*⁷: But then the cause, means, motives and encouragements of it, all shew it to be of the grace of God, and a gift of his. And which may further appear, by,

Thirdly,

¹ Ephes. ii. 12.

² Psalm cxix. 49.

³ 1 Peter i. 3.

⁴ Rom. xv. 4.

⁵ Ibid. v. 20.

⁶ Rom. v. 4.

⁷ Col. i. 23.

world having salvation, and is become the author of it ; that it is already done, Christ on the cross said, *it is finished*^a, and now he is on the throne, he says, *it is done*^b, and so compleatly done, that nothing is wanting in it, nor can any thing be added to it ; and therefore the man that is acquainted with all this, hopes for it through the grace of Christ, that has wrought it, without any works of his : he further observes, that Christ came to seek, and to save lost sinners ; yea, that it is a truth to be depended on, and is worthy of his acceptation and the acceptation of others, that *Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners* ; and that the worst and vilest have been *washed, cleansed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God* ; and therefore he hopes for salvation through the same grace and favour that has been shewn to them, though he has been as bad as they, and may think himself worse ; he takes notice that Christ is lifted up in the ministry of the word, as the brazen-serpent was lifted up on the pole, that whoever looks to him and *believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life* ; he is encouraged by the gospel-declaration that *whoever believes in him shall be saved*^c ; and by the gospel-instruction given to a sensible sinner in his case, *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*^d ; which he considers as wonderful displays of the grace of God in Christ, through which he is enabled to hope in him.

2dly, Let it be the pardon of sin he is hoping for : As sin is the first thing the Spirit of God convinces a man of, it is the pardon of it that he in the first place seeks after ; and when he understands the right way in which it is to be had, he hopes for it ; not through his tears, humiliations, and repentance, but through the grace of God streaming in the blood of Jesus : He finds that God only can forgive sin, against whom it is committed ; that this is his sole prerogative, which he exercises in a free and sovereign manner ; that he has promised, in covenant to his people, that he *will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will he remember no more*^e ; that he has proclaimed his name in his gospel, *a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin*^f ; and that there is none like him on that account ; and therefore he is greatly encouraged to turn to the Lord, who will abundantly pardon, and to hope in his mercy : He understands by the sacred writings, that God sent forth his Son to be the propitiation for sin ; and that he sent him forth in the fulness of time to shed his blood for the remission of it, there being no remission without shedding of blood ; and that he has *exalted him at his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins* ; and therefore he hopes for it through him, seeing *with him there is mercy and plenteous redemption* : And though he observes that forgiveness of sin is through the blood of Christ, yet

according

^a John xix. 30.

^b Rev. xxi. 6.

^c Mark xvi. 16.

^d Acts xvi. 31.

^e Heb. viii. 12.

^f Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

nal life upon the account of it; imagining there is none the King of kings will delight to honour in the other world as himself, who enjoys so large a portion of this; this is a bad hope. There is the hope of the man that is only upon principles in which he has been brought up; who hopes upon the faith of others, his natural descent, or being born of such and such parents, and his religious education; this is a bad hope. There is the hope of the *moralist* and *legalist*; who hopes he shall inherit eternal life because of the good things he has done; because of his moral life and actions, and his works of righteousness in obedience to the law; whereas by these no man can be justified, and so not saved, or ever enter into the kingdom of heaven; this is a bad hope. There is the hope of the hypocrite, who hopes for heaven because of his profession of religion and subjection to ordinances, and going through a round of duties in a formal manner, and with a mere outward show; this is a bad hope; it is like the spider's web, and will be as the giving up of the Ghost, and be of no avail; even though such may have gained a name among men to be holy and good, when God takes away their souls. And there is the hope of the profane sinner, for such have their hope; and they hope for salvation through the absolute mercy of God; they fancy if they have but time to say at last, "Lord have mercy on us," all will be well; this is a bad hope; for there is no mercy for sinners, but through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ. But the hope we have been treating of is a good one, and may be so called,

1st, Because it is laid upon a good foundation; not upon the absolute mercy of God; not upon the merit of the creature; not upon any outward acts of righteousness; not upon civility, morality, or an external profession of religion; all which are sandy foundations to build an hope of eternal happiness upon: but upon the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; upon the person of Christ, who is God over all blessed for ever, and is able to save to the uttermost, who is *the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof* in time of trouble, and *Christ our hope*, and *in us the hope of glory*; upon his blood, which cleanses from all sin, and was shed for the remission of it; upon his righteousness, which justifies from all sin, and gives a right and title to eternal life; and upon his sacrifice, by which sin is finished and made an end of, and reconciliation is made for it.

2dly, Because not only the author of it is good, who from it is called *the God of hope*, but because the objects of it are good things; it is of good things to come, and the best things are reserved till last; now the saints have their evil things, their sorrows and afflictions, but hereafter they shall have their good things. Christ is come an high priest of good things to come unto his people; and these good things are laid up for them, and shall be enjoyed by them; and hope =

saved through hope; being begotten unto it, we are kept through it, till we receive the end of it, the salvation of our souls; wherefore upon the whole, it must be good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord^v.

There is a sort of people risen up among us of late, who sneer at this phrase, *a good hope through grace*, not considering that it is a scriptural one; and represent such who have attained to nothing higher, as in the lower form and class of christians, if they deserve that name; and suggest, that persons may have this and everlasting perish: but let us not regard what these *fligbtly* people say; let us attend to what the scriptures say, to what our text says concerning it; which speaks of it as of God, as a gift of his; ascribes it to his grace; represents it as a fruit of the love of God and Christ; joins it with everlasting consolation; and mentions it as a blessing of grace, which the apostles themselves, whom God had set in the first place in the church, in the highest office in it, were possessed of, and were thankful for: Let us attend to what a *solid* saint on a dying bed says of *a good hope through grace*; what his sentiments, his notions of it are; and such an one, I mean a *solid saint*, was our deceased friend, whose death is the occasion of this discourse; as must be allowed by all that knew him, who are capable of judging of a spiritual man.

At my first visit to him after he had took to his bed, upon inquiring into the spiritual estate and frame of his soul, he told me, he had *a good hope through grace*; and added, if I may but go out of the world with *a good hope through grace*, it will be more to me than all the exultations and joys some persons speak of; that is enough, I am content, or words to this purpose; and subjoined, that if any thing should be said of him after his decease, meaning in this public way, he desired it might be from this passage of scripture, we have been considering. It pleased God to favour him with a religious education, to bless him with an early conversion, and to cast him betimes under a gospel ministry; by which means his judgment was formed, fixed, and established in gospel principles, in the doctrines of grace, of which he had a clear discerning: And as he had a retentive memory, he treasured up in it the quintessence and flower of gospel discourses, and the pithy sayings and sententious expressions he had heard or read in them; which, together with that large stock and fund of gracious experience of the love of God to his own soul, abundantly furnished him with rich materials for spiritual discourse; and which made his conversation very pleasant, profitable, and instructive; he being able to speak of divine things in very apt words, with great freedom, propriety, and pertinence. The frame of his soul was generally spiritual and heavenly, and so habituated he was to spiritual things, and so much given to the contemplation of them, and meditation upon them, that in the midst of worldly business, and even upon the Exchange,

when

3. To continue in the use of this grace; to pray for the holy Spirit of God to cause us to abound in it; and to enable us to hold fast the rejoicing of it firm unto the end; to gird up the loins of our minds, and hope for future grace and eternal glory; and to go on hoping, believing, loving, until hope is exchanged for fruition, faith for vision, and love is in its highest exercise.

S E R M O N XXVIII*.

Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Mr AARON SPURRIER, late Pastor of a Church of CHRIST at Limehouse. Preached Sept. 17, 1749.

PHILIPPIANS I. 23.

Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

ABOUT two years ago I stood in this place, and delivered a discourse at the ordination of your late pastor, and now I am here at his dying request to preach his funeral sermon; a sudden change, a quick alteration this! He has soon done his work, run out his race, and finished his course, and is entered into the joy of his Lord; and what remains for you to do, is to take notice of the providence, and make a right use of it; and now to attend to the words read, the subject of the following discourse; which are part of an epistle sent to the church at *Philippi* by the apostle *Paul*, when he was a prisoner at *Rome*.

And after the inscription of it; and description of the church, its officers and members, and various expressions of respect unto them and petitions for them, the apostle gives an account of his bonds, and the usefulness of them for the spread of the gospel, and the encouragement of gospel-ministers: and though some did not preach Christ from right ends, and with right views, as others did, it was a pleasure to the apostle that he was however preached; and he was persuaded, that the ill designed him in their ministry would be for his good, and Christ would be magnified in him in life and death: that continuance in life would be for the glory of Christ, and the good of his interest, and his death also would be gain both to Christ and himself:

And this made it difficult with him which to chuse, life or death, since he could not well say in which way Christ would be most magnified in him, whether by his

* This Sermon was never before printed.

*nibbetb away*¹: death is a departing this life; and when a good man departs out of it, he enters into another, even into eternal life.

² When a man dies, he departs from his relations, friends and acquaintance, and they see him no more; the place where he lived, and the men of it, know him no more; he returns no more to this present world, into this frail mortal state: his friends shall go to him, but he shall not return to them, as *David* said of his child; and at the resurrection-morn there will be a glorious meeting of the saints, when they shall come together, both living and raised ones, and shall never part more, but shall be together for ever with Christ.

Death is, as it were, no other with the saints, than a *departing or removing* from one house to another, *from the earthly house of this tabernacle*, the body, to the *house not made with bands, eternal in the heavens*: from houses of clay which have their foundation in the dust, to everlasting habitations, to those mansions of joy and bliss, which are in Christ's Father's house.

Now all this may serve to make death easy and familiar to us, and take off from the terror which it naturally induceth; it is but like going from one house to another, and that a better, an house in heaven; from one city to another, and that a better, *a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is the greatest*; from one country to another, and that a better, even an heavenly one. So *b* speaks of death in such language as this, and to such a purpose, to render it more agreeable to him; *if I wait, the grave is my house: I have made my bed in darkness: I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*, Job xvii. 13, 14.

and from this account of death, it may be observed, that it is not an annihilation of man; it is an analysis of human nature, a separation and disunion of its soul and body, but neither of them cease to be; the soul exists in a separate, either of happiness or misery; and the body is reduced to dust, yet to nothing: though it is crumbled into ten thousand atoms and more, yet it is in being; though it is, like a tabernacle, taken down, and its parts separated; yet these are carefully laid up to be put together in a more beautiful form: though man at death looses from one shore and port, he is presently in another; and though he goes out of one world, he is in another; though he is here, he is elsewhere: it is said of some, that they *were not*, as *Enoch* and his children, Gen. v. 24, Jer. xxxi. 15. but the meaning is, not that they are not in being, but that they were not on earth; they were taken from thence, and with God. I proceed,

consider the *desire* the apostle had of departing or dying; *having a desire* which phrase, as a learned man observes², signifies, a vehement and

perpetual desire; it was not a mere velleity, that rose up in his mind, a cold and faint wish in his breast, but a strong impulse upon him, a passionate desire to be gone; nor was it a new desire, a sudden start of mind, but what he had had a long time, and which grew stronger and stronger; nor was it carnal and sinful, but spiritual, not from nature but from grace; for,

1st. He did not desire simply to die, or desire dying for the sake of death, but for some other end here mentioned: to desire death, simply considered, is contrary to nature; contrary to a first principle in nature, self-preservation: all men naturally desire to live: *what man is he that defreth life?*^a every man does; he will do, or suffer, or part with any thing, to keep that: true it is, what Satan said, *skin for skin, yea, all that a man batb, will be give for his life*^b: when human nature was innocent and sinless, nothing was more disagreeable to it than death; wherefore, to keep man in awe of his maker, and fix in him an attention to his will, and preserve him in his obedience to him, death was made the sanction of the law that was given him; therefore when our first parents were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit, the greatest fence they had against the temptation, and the strongest objection to a compliance with it, was, *God batb said, ye shall not eat of it, neitber shall ye touch it, lest ye die*: and the devil had no other way of answering and removing this objection, than by asserting a downright falsehood, and contradicting the express word of God, *saying, ye shall not surely die*^c. Even in the sinless human nature of Christ there was a desire of life, and an aversion to death: as such he prayed to be saved from the hour of death, and that its bitter cup might pass from him; it is true, his death was attended with such circumstances as made it terrible indeed; he had all the sins of his people on him, and suffered in their room and stead; and bore the wrath of God; and endured the whole curse of the law, and all the punishment due to their sins; and therefore it is no wonder that his human nature, left to itself, should shudder and shrink at it; yet it seems that death itself, as such, was disagreeable to it; though he corrects his desire of life, and submits his request to the divine will, *John xii. 27. Matt. xxvi. 39.*

Death is not in itself a real good, and therefore not to be desired in itself; yea, it is an evil, a penal evil; it was threatened in case of sin, and is inflicted as a punishment of it; *the wages of sin is death*^d: and on the other hand, life, and a continuance of it, long life, has been always esteemed a blessing; and is promised as an encouragement to obedience^e. Death is the fruit and effect of sin; it entered into the world by it, and has set up its empire through it: it reigns over men with an uncontrollable power and authority; it is a king, and a *king of terrors*^f;

a ter-

^a Psalm xxxiv. 12.

^b Job ii. 4.

^c Gen. ii. 17. & iii. 3, 4.

^d Rom. vi. 23.

^e Ephes. vi. 2, 3.

^f Job xviii. 10.

a terrible one, very formidable to human nature, it is an enemy to it, and the last enemy, the stoutest of all, which holds out the longest, and is hard to be subdued and conquered; the *last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*¹. Death in itself is awful and shocking, and which nature seeks to flee from and avoid; there being pain and bitterness in it, and in its consequence, an awful judgment, a future state follow upon it, in which men must be happy or miserable: and even good men have sometimes been *all their life-time, through fear of death, subject to bondage*². When therefore the apostle desired to die, it must be something above nature that moved him to it. Nor,

2dly, Did he desire it in an unlawful or dishonourable way; not to take it away himself; for as to desire death is contrary to a principle of nature, so for a man to be the author of it himself, is contrary to a principle of grace: nor that any other man should take it from him; as *Saul* desired his armour-bearer to draw his sword, and thrust it through him; which he refusing, he fell upon his own sword and died, being unwilling to fall into the hands of the Philistines. Some, through the terrors of a guilty conscience, have desired death, and have even destroyed themselves, as *Judas* did; not being able to stand up under the weight of guilt they are pressed with; crying out with *Cain*, that their punishment is greater than they can bear³. This is a piece of shocking stupidity, that, in order to be out of a lesser hell they feel within them, they throw themselves into the greater, into an abyss of wo, into endless horror and misery; and to avoid the present gnawings of a natural conscience, plunge themselves into a state irretrievable and irrecoverable, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

Others have desired death because not able to support themselves under a disappointment of what their pride and ambition have prompted unto; because they could not have their will complied with, and their lusts gratified: so *Abi-topbel*, because his counsel was not followed, and his ambitious views answered, in the pride of his heart sought death, and laid violent hands upon himself. It is reported of *Aristotle*, though some say he died a natural death, that not being able to find out the cause of the ebbing and flowing of the sea, at a place called *Euripus*, where it ebbed and flowed seven times a day, he threw himself into it and was drowned: and *Nazianzen*⁴ says, he died there; and *Justin Martyr*⁵ that he died there with grief: this is dying in a poor, mean, and dishonourable manner.

It has been an infirmity that has attended some good persons, who have wished for death in a pet or passion, because they could not have their wills, or were under some sore and pressing trouble: so *Rachel* said, give me children, or else I

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die;

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 26.

² Heb. ii. 15.

³ Gen. iv. 13.

⁴ Orat. 3. adv. Julian. p. 79. vol. I.

⁵ Ad Græcos Cohort. p. 34.

die^a; suggesting, that she could not live, nor desired to live, unless she had some; and that she had rather die, than live childless. So *Jonah*, when he had lost his gourd, and the sun beat vehemently on him, in a passionate fit wished to die, and said, *It is better for me to die than to live*: and when the Lord expostulated with him, saying, *Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd?* He persists in his passion, and insists upon it, that he did *well to be angry even unto death*^b: but this was his weakness. So *Moses*, unable to bear the weight of the care and government of the children of *Israel*, desires the Lord would *kill him out of hand*, and *let him not see his wretchedness*^b: so *Elijah* the prophet, when threatened and persecuted by *Jezebel*, *requested for himself that he might die*^c: and this was what *Job* very vehemently wished for under his sore troubles and afflictions: but it is a much more noble and ingenuous spirit, which the saints show in the exercise of grace, when they desire, that neither their afflictions may be removed from them, nor they from them, until it is the will and pleasure of God; and when they request more grace and strength to support under them, and pray for more faith and patience to bear them, and wait the Lord's own time to deliver them out of them. But,

3dly, The apostle desired death upon right principles, and with right views: he desired it with submission to the divine will; he that would not determine upon a journey to visit any of the churches, or promise to take one, without saying, *if the Lord will*; would never think of a journey into the other world, or of a voyage from the shores of time, to those of eternity, without a special regard to the will of God: he did not desire to die sooner than it was the pleasure of God he should; his desire was bounded and limited, as that of his Lord and Master's was, saying, *not my will, but thine be done*^d: nor did he desire to die before he had done his work; the context shews the struggle he had between personal gain, and public usefulness; and of such a noble spirit he was, that he postponed his private advantage to the public service of the church, and inclined, upon this consideration, rather to live than die. Good men, in a right spirit, when they most vehemently desire death, desire it that they may be freed from sin, from the temptations of Satan, and the snares of this world; being burdened with a body of sin and death, they drag about with them, they groan and earnestly desire deliverance; being pressed with Satan's temptations, they long for that state where they shall be no more expos'd to them; and, *their righteous souls being vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked*, as was *Lot*, and weary of their lives, because of the wickedness of the sons of men, as *Rebekah* was, because of the daughters of *Heth*; they breathe after that perfect state in which they will be compleatly holy, without sin and sinful company: and it was with such a view

as

^a Gen. xxx. 2.^b Jonah iii. 8, 9.^c Numb. xi. 15.^d 1 Kings xix. 4.^a Luke xxii. 42.

as this, no doubt, that the apostle desired to die; and certain it is, that he did not desire death of itself, but in connexion with something else, with *being with Christ*: and so every gracious soul desires to die, not for the sake of dying, not that they would be unclothed, stripped of the body, the tabernacle, but clothed upon with their bouse from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life: not that they desired a mortal state, or to be under the power of death and the grave; but that they might enjoy eternal life: wherefore, seeing they reckon themselves absent from the Lord, whilst they are at home in the body; they chuse rather, and it is their earnest wish and desire, to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord^{*}; which is the same thing as to be with Christ: for the sake of which, and perfect conformity to him, and uninterrupted communion with him, death is desired. Now before a person arrives to a settled, composed frame of soul, as to desire in good earnest to die upon such principles, and with such views as mentioned,

1. Such persons and things in this world, which were once near and dear to him must, be as nothing; he must be dead to the world, and that to him, or he will never truly desire death; so long as he hankers after any person or thing in it, he will be loth to die: which is frequently the case of the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband, and one friend to another; relations hang about them, and have a great share in their affections: the things of the world stick close to them, and they do not know how to part with either: one has a family of children, and he would be glad to see them brought up or better provided for; another, his circumstances in the world are good, and he chooses to live a little longer, that he might enjoy what with great care and industry he has obtained, or what God in his providence has plentifully put into his hands; a third, his circumstances are bad, and he is very desirous of abiding in the flesh, in hopes he shall be able to retrieve himself, and make a better provision for his family, and not leave them distressed and incumbered; now that man must have his heart loosened from the world, and all things in it, ere he will be willing to die; and when this is the case, then he is for leaving all to be with Christ; then, father, mother, wife and children, brother, sister, houses and lands, are all nothing: God, Christ, heaven, glory, and eternal life, are all in all; the things of the world are light in comparison of the eternal weight of glory he is rejoicing in the hope of; and he can easily part with them, and leave all to be with Christ.

2. He has other views and notions of death, than what are common; he considers it not as an evil, but as a part of the inventory of the saints goods; *death is yours*[†]; not as a penal evil, as the wages of sin, but as a blessed privilege;

not as having the sting of sin in it, and as armed with vengeance; but as having its sting taken away from it by Christ, and disarmed by him; and can say, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*^a He looks upon it, not as an enemy, but as a friend, as an outlet of his sorrows and troubles, and as an inlet of his joys and pleasures: it does not appear with that grim and ghastly look, and in that terrible form, it does to others. Wherefore,

3. He is without fear of it, or of him that has the power of it, or of any consequence following upon it: he is not afraid of the pangs of death; he knows his Lord can make it easy to him: the bitterness of it is past with him; nor is he afraid of Satan, and the whole posse of devils; the reason why wicked men, when they come to die, are afraid, is because they apprehend a band of infernal furies are about their bed, ready to carry their souls into eternal torments; but the believer has no such fears, he knows the angels are about him, ready to do their office, and carry his soul into *Abraham's bosom*, as soon as separated from his body: nor has he any dread of a future judgment; he knows things will go well with him then; the Judge will be his friend, and give him the crown of righteousness laid up for him; and if a man has any fears about either of these, he will never desire to die.

4. He must be satisfied of his spiritual state and condition; that God has loved him with an everlasting love; that he has chosen him in Christ to be holy and happy; that he has made a covenant with him in Christ, ordered in all things and sure; and is his covenant God and Father: must be persuaded that Christ has loved him and given himself for him, and is his Saviour and Redeemer; and then he will say, as old *Simeon* did, when he had the child Jesus in his arms, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*^b: he must know that his iniquities are pardoned through the blood of Christ, and that he is justified by his righteousness, which will answer for him in a time to come; that "he is an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ, being begotten again to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance;" he must be satisfied that the Spirit of God has begun the good work of grace upon his soul, and is working him up for that self-same thing, eternal glory; that he has both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, through Christ; and that the everlasting doors shall be thrown open for him, and he shall have a rich and an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of his Lord.

5. He must know whither he is going, or he will never desire to depart hence; that he is going to heaven, to glory, to eternal happiness; who would choose to loose from one port, unless bound for another? and he knows where it is he is bound for? who would choose to remove out of one house, unless another

^a 1 Cor. xv. 55.

^b Luke ii. 29, 30.

other is provided for him, and that a better, and he knows it to be so? who would be willing, with Hobbes the Atheist, to take a leap in the dark? or to be in the case of Adrian the emperor, who when dying said, *Animula, vagula, blandula, quo tu abilis?* "Ah, poor, little, wandering, fluttering soul, whither wilt thou go? where art thou going?" He knew not where. But a gracious soul, that is truly willing to die, knows where it is going, and to what company, to be with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, with angels and glorified saints; and therefore he desires to depart.

This was the happy case of the apostle *Paul*; he knew his interest in the unchangeable love of God; and was persuaded that nothing could separate him from it; he knew his interest in Christ, he knew in whom he had believed; who he was, and what he was to him; and that he was able to keep what he had committed to him against another day; he knew, that though he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious person, he had obtained mercy; and that the grace of God, in great abundance, was bestowed upon him; and that he was an heir of glory; and indeed it is no wonder that such a man should desire to die, who had such an assurance of the love of God and Christ unto him, and had been so long and eminently useful; had done so much service for Christ, and good to the souls of men; and was now *Paul* the aged, far advanced in years; his race run out, his course finished, and the time of his departure at hand.

But that our deceased friend and brother should have a desire to die, may seem somewhat strange; a *man*, and desire to die, which is contrary to a principle in human nature; a *sinful man*, and desire to die; and therefore must know that his sins were pardoned, and his soul cleansed from the guilt and filth of them through the blood of Christ; a *young man*, and desire to die, and leave all the pleasures of this life, which the youthful age delights in, and to which long life is usually desirable; a *young minister* of the gospel, and desire to die, when just arrived to the highest post of honour in the church, having a large prospect of usefulness before him; just entering upon it, and blessed with much of it; beloved by the church, caressed by his friends; and yet willing to leave all, and depart hence; this must be owing, not to nature, but to grace, and to the faith and hope he had of *being with Christ*? Which brings me,

III. To consider the ground of this desire; what it was that raised, moved, encouraged, increased, and continued it; *to be with Christ*. To be with saints in a perfect, glorified state, is much; to be with the holy angels, more; but to be with Christ, is best of all; and which is to be understood, not to the exclusion of the Father and of the Spirit, for these three are one; and where the one is, the others are; and he that is with one, is with them all; and in the ultimate state

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state of glory, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be *all in all*; but Christ is only mentioned, as being in our nature, in heaven, and the medium of all glory and happiness there, as of all grace here; and as being dear to the apostle, and so to all the saints; having done and suffered so much for them, standing in such relations to them, and bearing and performing such offices for them; as well as by reason of the glory and loveliness of his person, and his exceeding great love to them.

There is a nearness between Christ and his people now; they are in him, and he is in them; they are chosen in him, and blessed in him with spiritual blessings; they are created in him unto good works; they are brought to believe in him, and are in him as branches in the vine, and bring forth fruit; and he is formed in their hearts, and lives in them: it is not so much they that live spiritually, as it is Christ that lives in them; he dwells in their hearts by faith, and they in him; and hence they have communion with him, both in a private, and in a public way; when they are alone in their closets, or in secret meditation and ejaculations of mind, when in their families, and in conversation with christians, and when hearing the word, and attending on ordinances: sometimes they are *with him* in his chamber above, where he brings them, and they remember his love; and sometimes in his banqueting-house, with other saints, where they sit under his shadow with great delight, tasting the sweetness of his precious fruits; and where he sits with them at his table; bids them welcome, and they enjoy his gracious presence and desirable company; but then he is but as a *wayfaring man*, who continues but for a short time; wherefore *being in the body*, though fellowship with Christ is sometimes had, is reckoned no other than *absence from the Lord*; but after death there is an immediate *being with Christ*; the separate soul is at once with him in paradise, where it remains until the resurrection-morn; and then, the glorified saint, in soul and body, being re-united, lives with Christ a thousand years on earth; and when the term is up, it reigns with him for ever and ever in heaven; and so shall be for ever with the Lord, enjoying uninterrupted communion with him.

Now this is what the apostle desired to die for, that he might be with the Lord in this sense; and this is the sum of Christ's prayers and intercessions for his people, that they *might be with him, and behold his glory*; and this is the design, the end and issue of his preparations for them, that *where he is, they may be also*; and herein lies the happiness of the saints, and great it is to be with such a glorious person as Christ, whose glory is *the glory of the only-begotten of the father*; who is *the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person*; is *in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with him*; is possessed of all divine perfections, *the fulness of the godhead dwelling bodily in him*; and is *King of kings, and Lord of lords*. To be with one that stands in such near relations

tions to them, as their everlasting father, that bears an everlasting love to them, takes an everlasting care of them, and makes everlasting provisions for them; their tender husband, who nourishes and cherishes them as his own flesh; their near kinsman; their brother, and *first-born among many brethren*; and who is their dearly-beloved friend, a friend that *loves at all times, and sticks closer than a brother*; to be with such a person must needs be desirable; to be with one that has sustained such offices for them, who is the only mediator between God and man; is their prophet, to teach and instruct them, as he does by his word and spirit; their priest, to atone for their sins, and make intercession for them; their king, to rule over them, defend and protect them, the head of the church and over all things to it, the Saviour of the body, and the Redeemer of their souls from destruction, is worth dying for: to be with one who has done and suffered so much for them, who became their surety in eternity, made a covenant with his Father on their account; assumed their nature in the fulness of time; was made under the law; obeyed its precept; and suffered its penalty; bore their sins, and was made sin and a curse for them; shed his blood, and washed them from their sins in it, and made them *kings and priests to God*; to see and be with such a person, and that for ever, must be esteemed an happiness indeed; and as such to be desired and even death, in order to it. If his gracious presence now is so desirable as to be preferred to all things in life, and as filling with a joy that creatures cannot give; how much more to be desired is the presence of Christ in heaven, *where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore?* To be with Christ, is not only the believer's gain and profit, but it will be for his honour and glory; he will be where his Lord and Master is; he will appear in glory with him; he will walk with him in white apparel, being worthy through his worthiness; yea, he will sit down upon the same throne with him, and reign with him, and be glorified together. And this leads me,

IV. To observe the preferableness and superexcellency of this desired happiness; *which is far better*, by much the rather better, abundantly exceedingly much better¹; there is no comparison between *being in the flesh*, and *being with Christ*: it is not indeed better to die than to live; life is preferable to death; but it is better to die and be *with Christ*, than to live in this world; whilst the saints are in the world, they must expect trouble; God has appointed it, man is born to it; Christ has left it as a legacy to his people; and through it they must enter the kingdom: but at death there is an end put to all; and in the other state there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, nor trouble of any sort, inward or outward; and therefore preferable to this: the present state is a sinful one; there is not a just man that lives without sin; as long as the saints.

¹ πολλω μεττοι κρισσοι.

saints are in this tabernacle, they will be burdened with a body of sin and death, under which they groan ; but after death there will be no more sinning, no more of the corruption of nature, or an evil heart of unbelief ; but their souls will be among the spirits of just men made perfect, and *with Christ*, presented to himself without spot or wrinkle, and to his Father faultless. Now they are harrassed with the temptations of Satan ; but then they will be out of the reach of his fiery darts : now they have only communion with Christ at certain times; but then it will be without any cessation or interruption ; wherefore it must be much more eligible to a gracious soul *to die and be with Christ*, than to live in this sinful, troublesom world.

Moreover to depart hence, and be with Christ, is better than a well-spent life in the service of Christ, and to his glory ; yea, than even labouring in the ministry ; and that with success, and usefulness to the souls of men, and honour to the Redeemer ; for though a minister of Christ may, as the apostle did, take the utmost pleasure and delight in the work of the ministry, and be very useful in it, as no man was more so than he ; yet it is a work, and a toilsom and labourious one, and wearisom to the flesh ; wherefore dying, and being with Christ, must be desirable, with proper limitations before observed ; since then, the servant of Christ *rests from his labour, and his works follow him* : at least, it must be better for him, though not for others ; and so the *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions add, by way of supplement, *for me* ; for the apostle to live longer, might have been better, and more to the service of Christ, the glory of his name, and the good of his churches ; but to leave the world, and be with Christ, was better for him ; which made him incline to desire death.

From all which it appears, that there is a future state after death. Some think, when they die, there is an end of them ; and therefore indulge themselves in all manner of sins ; but such should know, that after death comes judgment ; and that for all these things they shall be brought into it ; and thus the soul exists in a separate state, and the body, though laid in the grave, will be raised again, to receive for the things done in it, of which an account must be given : besides, if this was the case, death would not be desirable ; it is better to be, than not to be ; to have a being, though attended with infirmity, imperfection, and trouble, is more eligible than to have none at all ; especially it is much more desirable to a believer, because now at times, he has the presence of God, communion with Christ, the comfortable influences of the Spirit, and delightful conversation with the people of God ; all which he would be deprived of, if at death he entered into a state of non-existence ; wherefore the apostle, when he expresses his desire *to depart*, he signifies, it was that he might *be*, might exist somewhere else ; and he tells us where and with whom, *with Christ, and where he is*. Hence it may be further observed,

That

That the only happy state after death, is *to be with Christ*: if a man is not with him, he is with devils and damned spirits, he is in hell, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; he is *gone to his own place*, and is in everlasting punishment; but if he is *with Christ*, he is happy, he enjoys the beatific vision of God, he sees Christ as he is, in his glory, and is made like unto him, and is in fulness of joy: and this happy state is entered into at once, upon a departure out of this world; hence these two are closely joined together, *to depart, and to be with Christ*, the one immediately following the other; and so our Lord told the penitent thief on the cross, that that day he should *be with him in paradise*^k: and were it not so, was this happiness to be deferred longer, was there any future period fixed when it was to commence, as at the first resurrection, the beginning of the thousand years, and the last judgment, it would be much more desirable to live on earth until that time, than to die; since in the mean while some service might be done for Christ, and some enjoyment might be had of him; which would make living in the world, preferable to a state of uselessness and inactivity; wherefore from this desire of the apostle's, it may be concluded, that the soul does not sleep with the body, in the grave, until the resurrection-morn: had he known any thing of this, death would not have been so desirable to him, at least not so soon; it would have been better for him, and better for the churches of Christ, if he had continued to this day, and even to the end of the world, than to be in a sleepy, senseless, and inactive state and condition. Thus have I endeavoured to explain and improve the passage of scripture read to you, at the request of my deceased friend and brother, whose character will now be expected from me, and I shall only attend to that part of it which concerns him as a christian and a minister of the gospel.

Mr AARON SPURRIER was born of believing parents, and had the advantage of a religious education; his father was a Minister of the word, who died when he was young, and left him to the care of his religious mother, who brought him up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; and a blessing it is to be so brought up; for when a child is trained up in the way he should go, he will not easily and ordinarily depart from it: yet so it was, in the case of our brother, as he informed me, that notwithstanding the religious restraints that were upon him, he broke through them, and privately, and unknown to his friends, fell into the sins and vices of the age; which, when his conscience was awakened, and his mind illuminated by the spirit of God, lay with great weight upon him, and filled him with inexpressible horror and terror; under which he continued for some time, until it pleased God to bring and apply unto him, and set home with power upon him, these words of Christ to Peter, *I have prayed for thee;—and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*^l.

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^k Luke xxiii. 43.^l Luke xxiii. 32.

Two things he concluded from hence, one was, that he had an interest in Christ, an interest in his heart's love, and in his powerful and prevalent mediation and intercession ; which eased him of his burden, and gave him comfort : and the other was, that he saw it was the mind and will of God, that when he was converted, he should be a preacher of the gospel, and so be an instrument of comforting and strengthening others : wherefore when he came to a settled composure of mind, and to be satisfied about his spiritual and eternal estate, he gave himself up to the study of the scriptures, and of the doctrines of the gospel, to be learned from them, and to meditation and prayer, and to the reading of useful books, with a view to the work of the ministry ; his qualifications for which, in process of time, being taken notice of, he was called to exercise his gift, by the church to which he belonged ; what difficulties he met with in coming forth into the ministry, and the source of them, I shall not touch upon ; they are well known to many of you : however, these in time, were happily got over, and he was comfortably settled as a pastor among you, this church of Christ, the good effects of which you soon felt in the increase of your audience, and in the addition of members to your society.

Few young ministers come forth with such seriousness and solidity, with such spirituality and experience, with such humility and modesty, with such fervency and affection, with such clearness of light and soundness of judgment, as he did, considering his years, and some disadvantages he laboured under ; *he was a burning and a shining light*, and his light was more and more increasing, which promised a great deal of usefulness to the church of God ; and *ye for a season rejoiced in his light*^m ; and it was but for a season, and for a short season too ; a great deal of work was done by him among you in a little time, in the conversion of sinners, in the instruction of your minds, and in the regulation of the discipline of the church : but the all-wise disposer of all things thought fit to lay his hand upon him, and to afflict him with a lingering illness, which laid him aside from his work for some time, and at last issued in death.

During his illness, he was for the most part very comfortable in his soul ; at two several times that I visited him, I found his faith in Christ very strong and steady, built upon *the Rock of ages*, the sure foundation God has laid in *Zion* ; there being no other Saviour, or better foundation, as he observed, to be proposed instead of him ; to him he looked, on him he depended, in him he trusted ; and could with pleasure reflect upon the doctrines he taught others, as yielding the most solid consolation to himself on a dying bed : but at my last visit, and when he sent for me, I perceived he had had a conflict with Satan ; the enemy of souls came in upon him like a flood, putting him upon it to prove, that he ever knew

^m John v. 35.

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the reason of the Lord's coming forth against you in such a manner, and of his controversy with you ; and it might be reasonably thought you would be saying one to another, Is there not an *Acbar* in our camp ? and that every one would be putting the question that the disciples of Christ did in another case, *Is it I ? Is it I ?* Have you nothing to charge yourselves with ? No disrespect to the doctrines of the gospel ? No want of attendance on the ordinances of it ? No negligence in the affairs of the church and the discipline of it ? No unsuitable and unbecoming walk and conversation in any of you ? No declensions and backslidings among you, not taken notice of ; and the laws of Christ against delinquents not put in execution ? Something of this latter kind I understand was matter of concern to your late pastor ; who, as I am told, has left you his dying charge. May it be of use unto you to stir you up to be more active and diligent, to be *stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord* ; and to recover backsliders, and bring them back to the fold, or put you upon doing your duty to them. And,

3. To the church in general, I close with a word or two : do not be discouraged in your melancholy circumstances ; though the Lord has stripped you of one pastor after another, the residue of the Spirit is with him : who knows but that a double portion of it may fall upon some *Elisa* or another, that may be sent among you : our exalted Lord and King has received gifts for men, and he bestows them on them, to qualify them for pastors and teachers, that they may be useful in the work of the ministry, and for the edifying the body the church : and he has a sufficiency of these to give ; pray to him for them : I understand you are a praying people, that there is a spirit of prayer of late among you ; I rejoice to hear it ; you may hope for a blessing and expect it : go on praying to him who has promised to give *pastors according to his own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and with understanding*¹ ; and considering what a number of ministers have been removed by death, how few there are that are come forth in their room, how many churches are destitute of pastors ; it becomes us all to lay it to heart, and earnestly and fervently to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest², faithful, diligent, and useful ones.

¹ Jer. iii. 15.

² Matt. ix. 38.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N XXIX.

Occasioned by the Death of the Reverend Mr SAMUEL WILSON.
Preached October 14, 1750.

Act s XX. 38.

Sorrowing most of all for the word which he spake, that they should see his face no more..

BEING desired by you, the brethren and members of this church, to assist in your sorrow, on account of the death of your late dear pastor, in which I sincerely bear a part with you; and no passage of scripture being left by the deceased, nor any given me by his surviving relative, or by you, I considered with myself what would be most proper and suitable on such an occasion; I thought of one portion of scripture, and of another, but none hung upon my mind so much, and continued with me so long as the words I have read unto you; and therefore I determined, through divine assistance, to make them the subject of the following discourse.

The words manifestly refer to a single expression used by the apostle *Paul*, in a very moving and pathetic address, delivered by him to the elders of the church of *Ephesus* at *Miletus*, where he had convened them for that purpose; but before I enter into a particular consideration of them, I shall take leave to make some few remarks upon the address itself; and the rather, as it will not lead us out of sight of the text, but will open to us the true source of the sorrow expressed in it, and furnish us with reasons accounting for it. And,

1. The apostle observes what was his constant work and employment whilst he was in *Asia*, and his manner of performing it, ver. 18, 19. His work was, *serving the Lord*; not himself and his own belly; not seeking to gratify his sensual lusts, or to acquire riches and honour to himself, as the false teachers did; he was no time-server or man-pleaser, for then he would not have been the servant of Christ; but he served the Lord, Jehovah the Father; in the gospel of his Son, with all his heart and foul; and he served the Lord Christ by fully and faithfully preaching him; and in so doing, became the servant of the churches for Jesus' sake. His manner of performing this service was, *with all humility of mind*; for though he was favoured with extraordinary gifts, and was called to an extraordinary office, by which he was set not only above common saints,

saints, but above ordinary ministers of the word, and was *not bebind the chief of the apostles*; yet he was not lifted up with these things, but thought himself *less than the least of all saints*; being sensible of his own unworthiness to be employed in such service, and his insufficiency for it; and well knowing it was by the grace of God he was what he was, and did what he did, he therefore walked humbly before God, and in the sight of men; not assuming a dominion over the faith of any, or lording it over the heritage of God. And it was *with many tears* that he went through his work; he sowed the precious seed of the word in tears, and watered it with them; grieved he often was at the hardness, impenitence, and unbelief of many that heard him, and was greatly affected with the troubles of the saints, both inward and outward: who was offended or afflicted, and he burned not? and would frequently weep over the scandalous lives of carnal professors. And his service also was attended with *temptations that beset him*, not only from Satan, and his own heart, but from a wicked world, and especially *by the lying in wait of the Jews*, who sought to take away his life; and which were trials of his faith and patience, and of his courage and constancy in the service of his Lord: and now a minister so constant and laborious, so humble, so compassionate, and so self-denying, is it to be wondered at, that sorrow should be felt and expressed at parting with him?

2. The apostle goes on to take notice of the subject-matter of his ministry, or of what he chiefly insisted upon in it, ver. 20, 21. In general it was what *was profitable*, suitable, and convenient for them. He did not amuse his hearers with philosophical notions, or read lectures of mere morality to them, or deliver out speculative notions in divinity; but he taught them solid and substantial truths, the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, the wholesom words of our Lord Jesus, such as men are nourished up with unto everlasting life; things *profitable for doctrine, and instruction in righteousness*; even such doctrines as relate to the knowledge of the divine Being, Father, Son, and Spirit, to the state and condition of man by nature, as a fallen creature; and to his recovery, both by redeeming and efficacious grace: and of these things he *kept back nothing*; he did not withhold them either in whole or in part; nor did he withdraw or *fetch back*, as the word^a used may signify, what he had before said to them; but abode by it, and pronounced an anathema on such who preached any other gospel than what had been preached and received already; and this he *shewed unto them*, and made it clear, plain, and evident; and *taught them it publicly, and from house to house*; first publicly in the Jewish synagogue, then in the school of Tyrannus, chap. xix. 8—10. and in whatsoever public place of worship the people met together; and also privately in their own houses; which shews his diligence,

and

^a θεραπευτικόν. See Heb. x. 38, 39.

and industry, and concern for their spiritual welfare : and what he taught in the one place, and in the other, was uniform and all of a piece. In particular, the doctrines he chiefly insisted upon, or the whole of his ministry, were reducible to these two heads, *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus*. God, against whom man has sinned, is the object of the one ; and Christ, who is the Redeemer and Saviour, is the object of the other : repentance must be toward God ; it lies in a true sense of sin, and godly sorrow for it, in shame and blushing at it, and in owning and forsaking it, flowing from a view of the love of God, and of pardoning grace and mercy through Christ, attended with faith in him, and hope of salvation by him : faith has Christ for its object ; and it is a believing in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice ; a looking to him, leaning on him, trusting in him, and expecting grace, life, and salvation from him. These two doctrines went together in Christ's ministry, and are what he ordered his disciples to teach, and which they did ; endeavouring first to bring men to a sense of sin, and then encouraged them to believe in Christ : and this is the usual order in the Spirit's work upon the soul, through the ministry of the word, first to convince men of sin, then to work faith in their hearts, and take of the things of Christ, and shew and apply them to their souls for their peace and comfort : and those doctrines were taught by the apostle *without respect to persons* ; he testified them *both to Jews and Greeks* ; and now a minister who made it his business to deliver out such interesting truths, doctrines of such moment and importance to the souls of men, and was so faithful and diligent herein ; is there not good reason that those to whom he had ministered should be filled with sorrow and trouble, and shew deep concern of mind at his departure from them ?

3. The apostle declares the view he had of what sufferings he was to endure for the sake of the gospel, and which was not at all discouraging to him, ver. 22—24. He says, he was *going bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem* ; not in his own spirit, as being bound in conscience to perform a piece of service he had undertaken to do to the poor saints there from the Gentile churches ; and much less as if he was compressed, and straitened, and uneasy in his mind at what he was to suffer at *Jerusalem*, for this would be contrary to what he after says ; but in and by the Spirit of God, by which he was moved to go up to *Jerusalem*, notwithstanding the persuasions of his friends to the contrary, and what he should endure there ; by which he knew he should be put in bonds there ; and by the revelation of the Spirit he saw it as clearly as if he was bound already. Yet *not knowing the things that should befall him there* : that is, other things beside bonds, which are after excepted ; or whether those would issue in death there or elsewhere ; as yet this was not made known unto him ; save that the body

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Ghost witnessed in every city, that bonds and afflictions abode him, or waited for him. This he knew, not only from the common lot of Christ's ministers, and his own experience, but from the holy Ghost in the prophets, which were in every city where there was a church; who were all in this tone, having a spirit of prophecy in them, that he was going to endure great sufferings for the sake of Christ and the gospel; or the holy Ghost in himself testified beforehand to him of his sufferings, assuring him that in every city he came unto, and particularly in *Jerusalem*, persecution and affliction would attend him; and which, by the way, is no inconsiderable proof of the Deity of the blessed Spirit. *But none of these things moved him from his intended journey to Jerusalem*, which he was resolved upon; nor from preaching the gospel as he went along; nor did they disturb and distress his mind; neither did he *count his life dear unto himself*, than which nothing is dearer to men: *Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath, will be given for his life*^b. Yet this he made no account of; he did not value or regard it; he was willing to lay it down, so that he might but *testify the gospel of the grace of God*; or bear a testimony to it, which he was willing to do both by life and by death; even to that gospel, which is a declaration of the love, grace, and mercy of God, which asserts salvation to be all of grace, and is the means of conveying and implanting the grace of God in the hearts of men; and in so doing fulfil *the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus*; and which he had, as also gifts for it, as well as a commission to enter upon it, and execute it; and by all which he would *finish his course*, the race of his life, and course of his ministry, *with joy*, as he did; for a little before his death he could say, *I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day*^c. Now who could forbear shedding tears at parting with such a brave and courageous minister of the gospel; so undaunted at sufferings, so willing to lay down his life for the sake of the gospel, and the dear interest of the Redeemer?

4. The next thing observable in this moving speech, is the apostle's solemn appeal to those to whom he addressed himself for his faithfulness in the ministration of the gospel to them, ver. 25—27. which is introduced after this manner; he tells them, that he *knew*, and was assured, and which therefore was not a mere conjecture of his, but he had it by revelation, that none of them^{all}, meaning not only those before him, but all the christians in *Asia*, *among whom* he had gone *preaching the kingdom of God*; the kingdom of the Messiah, the kingdom of grace and glory, more especially the latter, and the things appertaining to it; as what is a man's meetness for it, regeneration by the Spirit of God; and what is his right unto it, the justifying righteousness of Christ; and what

^b Job ii. 5.

^c 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

what the glories of it, which are in some measure brought to light by the gospel; all such persons to whom he had preached these things in *Asia*, he affirms, should *see his face no more*; which was the cutting, wounding stroke, which touched them to the quick, pierced to the very heart, and set them a weeping and sorrowing as they did. And this is the word referred to in our text: upon which he calls them to bear witness that day, that he was *pure from the blood of all men*; he had acted the part of a faithful watchman, in giving warning from the mouth of the Lord; he had laid before men their state and danger; he had truly represented their condition to them; he had told them, that without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, they would die in their sins; he had pointed out the only way of life and salvation by Christ unto them, so that they would not perish for want of knowledge and the means of it; nor was he any ways accessory to their ruin; their destruction was of themselves; their blood was upon their own heads; he had nothing to answer for, he had faithfully discharged his duty to them: *for*, says he, *I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God*; not the secret purposes and decrees of God, those counsels of old which are faithfulness and truth, which are only known by prophecy, or by the dispensations of providence; but the gospel-revelation, and the whole scheme of it, which is the produce of divine wisdom; this he fully made known to all to whom he ministered, so that they, as well as *Timothy*^d, knew fully his doctrine as well as manner of life: he made use of no artful methods to conceal his principles, no ambiguous phrases, or words of double, or doubtful meaning; he renounced all such *bidden things of dishonesty*, and by *manifestation of the truth*, commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God: and now is it at all marvellous, that the persons to whom the apostle said these things, should have their hearts filled with sorrow, or that there should not be a dry eye among them, when a minister, so honest and ingenuous, so faithful and open-hearted, was taking his leave of them; and especially when they are told, that they should see his face no more?

5. Next follows the pressing exhortation of the apostle, ver. 28—31. to the elders of the church at *Ephesus*, to *take heed* to themselves; to their doctrine, that it be agreeable to the word of God; and to their conversation, that it was becoming the gospel of Christ: *and to all the flock*; the whole church of God, and every member of it, and watch over them, and preserve them from the error of the wicked: *over the which the holy Ghost had made them overseers*; by bestowing gifts upon them, qualifying of them for such an office, and inclining their hearts to take the oversight of them chearfully; and which is an argument why they should be careful of them, *to feed the church of God*; with whole-

som food, with the substantial truths of the gospel, which hold forth Christ and his grace, as the bread of life, and water of life; and the rather they should look upon themselves under obligation so to do, since Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever, has purchased this flock or church, *not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own blood*; which is exceeding precious, and of great value and efficacy. And the reason why the apostle was so importunate, and so pressing in this matter, was, because he knew by divine revelation, that *after his departing from hence, or by death, grievous wolves, false teachers, wolves in sheeps cloathing, fierce, ravenous, and greedy ones, would enter in among them privily; not sparing the flock; but fleecing and worrying it: yea, not only such should enter from without, but even of themselves, out of their own community, there should rise up men speaking perverse things; contrary to the scriptures, to the gospel, and things very pernicious to the souls of men, whereby they would draw away the disciples after them; make rents and schisms in the church, form new parties, and set up themselves at the head of them:* now of this the apostle had warned them incessantly for the three years last past, in the most tender and pressing manner, even with tears, which he desires them carefully to remember. And can it be thought that such an affectionate servant of Christ could be parted with, without tears shed for him, who had so great a regard both to the present and future well-being of the church, to which these elders belonged?

6. In the most affecting manner he takes his farewell of them, ver. 32. commanding them *to God*; to his grace to supply and support them, to his wisdom to direct them, and to his power to preserve and keep them; *and to the word of his grace*; either the written word, the same with the gospel of the grace of God, to make it the rule and subject of their ministration; or Christ the essential Word, who is full of grace and truth; each of which, both God, and his word, were able to build them up on their most holy faith, and carry on and finish the work of grace upon their souls, and make them useful to build up others on the rock of ages; and when they had done their work, to give them *an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*; both a meetness for, and a right unto *the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, that fades not away, and is reserved in the heavens*, and will be only enjoyed by sanctified persons; for it is an inheritance of the saints in light. And the whole speech is concluded with the apostle's declaration of his being free from the sin of covetousness; for the truth of which he appeals to the persons present, and exhorts them to imitate him, provide for themselves, and support others; to which he animates them by the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 33—35. and then closes all in prayer to God with them, and for them; upon which they all burst out into tears, and lift up their voice

voice and weep, and one after another fall upon the apostle's neck and kiss him, ver. 36, 37. A most moving scene this! It is hard to form just and adequate ideas of it, and still more difficult to express them in proper language; I cannot do it better than in the words of a very spiritual and affectionate commentator^e on the place, who represents it in the following manner. "How can I part with this dear creature, this blessed *Paul*, saith one, in whom my life is in a manner bound up? Farewell, my dear friend, saith another, a thousand thanks to thee, and ten thousand to God for thee, and for all the pains thou hast taken with me for my good: And must we part? saith another, must I lose my spiritual father, nurse, and guide? What will become of us now, saith another, when we shall no more have him to apply to, and receive directions from? What shall I do, if the Lord take away my master from my bread? My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the borsmen thereof." And then follow the words I first read, *Sorrowing most of all for the word which he spake, that they should see his face no more.* There were several things in this farewell-discourse, which affected them, and filled their hearts with grief and trouble; as what the apostle was like to suffer for the sake of Christ and his gospel, and what sad havock false teachers would make in the church under their care hereafter; but what most of all afflicted them was, that they were now just going to part with the apostle, and should never see him more. What I shall further do with these words, will be,

- I. To consider what that is which chiefly and principally affects and afflicts a people at parting with a gospel-minister, which is, *that they shall see his face no more.*
- II. Shew the nature of that sorrow which is, and may be expressed on such an occasion.
- III. Observe some reasons which induce such a sorrow, and which will serve to justify it when it is within due bounds.
- IV. Offer some things to consideration, in order to abate it, on the above account, and to regulate it, and keep it within proper limits.

I. I shall consider what that is, which of all things does mostly affect and afflict a people at parting with a gospel-minister, which is, *that they shall see his face no more.* And let it be observed,

1. That there are many cases which affect, but not so much affect, as this: as for instance, to part with a minister for a while, for a few weeks or months, when his urgent affairs call him elsewhere, or his presence is necessary in another branch of Christ's interest, for the service of it; this is not grateful to a people

by whom he is beloved ; it is with some reluctance he departs from them for a season ; but then they hope for his return, and, with as much patience as they can, wait for it : had this been the case here, it would have been bearable. The saints at *Ephesus* had an experience of this before. When the apostle was first with them, his stay was short ; they would fain have had him continued longer with them, but he refused, which no doubt was grieving to them ; but he returned again, and abode with them for the space of two years, and then was obliged to leave them through an uproar, but not without expressions of their tender regard to him ; they *embraced* him in their arms, and no doubt wept over him : and now a third time he visits them, by sending for them at *Miletus*, and tells them, that they shall see his face no more ; had he given some hopes of visiting them again, though he should for the present depart, or signified his intentions to do so, if it was the will of God, this would have been tolerable ; but to assure them they should never see him again, this cut them to the heart.

Again, To part with a gospel-minister wholly, to have him removed from one part of a country to another, from one church to another, there to abide, and not return again ; this is more affecting and afflicting than the other case, but not like this in the text. This may be, and sometimes is the case, that a minister does, and lawfully may remove from one people to another ; as when errors and heresies obtain, and they cannot be rooted out ; or immorality prevails, and no reformation can be made, the discipline of Christ's house is neglected, and the people will not suffer his laws to be put in execution ; or when a due maintenance is not, or cannot be provided for him, but both he and religion are exposed to the reproach of the world ; or disaffection between him and the people rises so high, on one account or another, that peace and fellowship cannot be maintained, nor the ends of the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances be answered : but then in such a case as this, as there may be some persons to whom he has been a spiritual father, or who have received comfort and edification by his ministry, and consequently must be greatly troubled and distressed at his removal from them ; so they may, if convenience will permit, go along with him ; or however they may hope to see his face, and hear his voice again one time or other.

Moreover, to have a gospel-minister drove away by the force of persecution, and removed into a corner, so that a people cannot behold their teacher in the place where they were wont to see him ; this must be very grieving and distressing, but not like this, seeing his face no more ; because in such times of persecution, they may both see and hear him in private houses, in cellars, and solitary places, in fields and woods, as our forefathers did. The witnesses prophesy,

of God, even as Jesus Christ¹; how beautiful are the feet, and much more the mouth and lips, of a messenger of peace, and publisher of the glad-tidings of salvation by Christ! But when a minister is dead, though his face may be seen before his interment, yet not without an alteration, and not with joy and pleasure.

But let it be observed, that when the apostle told the persons spoken of in the text, that they should see his face no more; and they believed him and therefore sorrowed, it is not to be understood as a contradiction to, or a denial of the resurrection of the dead: the apostle knew, and so did they, that though he would die, and never pay them another visit; yet he would rise again in power, in glory, in incorruption, and with a spiritual body; and so would they, and have the same eyes they had, and with them behold, as the God-man and mediator-Christ, or Christ in human nature, and that for themselves, and not another, so they should see each other, and that face to face; but the meaning is, that he would die, and should not rise again till the heavens be no more, till *the Lord shall descend from heaven with the voice of an archangel, when the dead in Christ will rise first; till the last trumpet sounds, and the dead rise incorruptible, and immortal.*

3. It may be very well thought, that there is in these words a figure which Rhetoricians call a *meiosis*, by which less is said than is understood, and more is designed than is expressed; and besides, the word here used not only signifies face or countenance, and also person, but all exterior, attending and surrounding circumstances; and so we may consider it as expressing the person of a gospel-minister in every view of him, and in every part of his office, who ceases to be viewed in it when death has done its own. And then,

His people see his face no more in his own house, to which they have at times resorted, to have their cases of conscience answered, their doubts resolved, or advice given them in matters of moment and difficulty. They see his face no more in their own houses; that is, they have no more of his friendly visits; no more his fervent prayers with them, and for them; no more his hearty counsel to them, and feel no more his sympathizing heart with them in their troubles, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature; the weak are no more supported, nor the feeble-minded comforted by his private instructions. They see his face no more at their church-meetings, there presiding over them, shewing the house to the house, the form and fashion of it, the goings-out and comings-in, and all the laws and ordinances of it; pointing who are to be admitted, and who to be rejected from the communion of the church; directing to every part of discipline, and to the rule of God's word for it; exhorting and reproving with all long-suffering and doctrine, such sharply, who have erred, that they be found

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¹ Acts vi. 15. Gal. iv. 19.

any good man, and especially for the loss of a gospel-minister. The God of nature has placed the affections in us for proper uses, and christianity leads unto them, and assists in them ; it is not counter-acting the man, or the christian, to express a proper degree of sorrow on such an occasion : persons of the most brave and heroic spirits, of the greatest firmness and resolution of mind, have shown a tenderness of spirit, and have been melted into tears on a like account. The apostle *Paul*, that man of spirit, and greatness of soul, suggests, that had *Epaphroditus* died, he should have had sorrow upon sorrow ; such a load of it, as would be scarcely bearable ; devout men carried out *Stephen*, when dead, to his grave, and lamented over him ; and even our Lord Jesus Christ, when he saw the Jews and *Mary* weeping at the grave of *Lazarus*, not only groaned in spirit, and was troubled, but wept over him himself.

2. Such sorrow is not worldly, but spiritual ; there is the sorrow of the world, which worketh death, a sorrow which worldly men have, and for the loss of worldly things ; as for loss of trade, and loss in trade, and for the loss of a man that is a good neighbour, and a good customer ; but of this nature is not the sorrow expressed in our text ; there was no worldly loss sustained by parting with the apostle ; but there was a spiritual one, and on that account the sorrow was : and so when a gospel-minister is removed by death, the sorrow for him is of a spiritual nature ; it is because he has been a spiritual father to some, and has been of use for the spiritual welfare of others : and a sorrow on this account is not blame-worthy, when it does not hinder the exercise of spiritual graces, as faith, hope, patience, resignation, and submission to the will of God.

3. This sorrow was universal ; as they all wept, they all sorrowed ; there was not a dry eye in the whole assembly ; it was a general loss, a loss to them all, and it occasioned a general lamentation : so the loss of a gospel-minister is a general loss, a loss not only to his family, and to that particular church, and every member of it to whom he ministered, but to the whole interest of Christ : when a great man is fallen in Israel, all Israel will be concerned for it ; when a prophet dies, there will be a general weeping for him ; when *Samuel* the prophet died, all the Israelites gathered together, and lamented him¹.

4. This sorrow was very painful ; the elders found great pain and uneasiness in their breasts, when they were told by the apostle they should see his face no more. The word, by which it is here expressed, is used to set forth that anguish of spirit, and distress of mind, which were in *Joseph* and *Mary*, when they had lost, and were seeking for the young child Jesus ; yea, it is used of the most excruciating torments^m : the sensation here felt, and the sorrow they were filled with, were like the pains and sorrow of a woman in travail ; by which our Lord sets forth the sorrow of the disciples when he should be taken from them, and they

¹ 2 Sam ii. 38. 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

^m οδυσμός. See Luke ii. 48. and xvi. 24, 25.

they should not see his face for a while^{*}: and such like sorrow is occasioned by the death of a gospel-minister to his people; it is like separating the nearest relations, husband and wife, parents and children; it is like plucking the flesh from the bones, and rending one member from another; so exceeding afflicting and painful is it. But, I proceed,

III. To assign the reasons which induce a people to sorrow after this manner, upon the death of a gospel-minister; and which will serve to justify such sorrow when it is kept within due bounds. And,

1. The characters which a minister of the gospel bears, lay a foundation for such sorrow, and furnish out a reason for it: he is a *servant of the most high God*; not only by creation, as all men are, and by grace, as every saint is, but by his office as a minister; whose work and business it is to shew unto men the way of salvation: he is a *minister of Christ*; of his appointing and sending, of his calling and qualifying, and whom he owns and makes useful: he is a *steward of the mysteries of God*, and of his *manifold grace*; and if he is faithful, which is required of stewards, and also wise, and gives to every one their portion of meat in due season, as on that account he is highly esteemed and valued in the family, so his loss will be justly lamented. He is an *ambassador of Christ*; personates him, stands in his stead, and speaks in his name, bringing a message, being sent on an embassy of peace, from him: he is a spiritual guide and *governor* in the church, whose faith is to be followed, and the end of his conversation considered, *which is Christ, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever*. And now in proportion to the characters he bears, is the loss of him, and in proportion to the loss of him, is sorrow for him; persons of figure and character, as in the state, so in the church, the death of them is to be lamented.

2. The relations which a gospel-minister stands in to his people, are another reason why they do, and why they may sorrow for him after a godly sort, and in moderation, when he is parted from them by death, and they cannot see his face any more: he stands in the relation of a father to them, of a spiritual father to some of them, as he has been the instrument of begetting them again to Christ by the gospel; so that he is not only an instructor of them, but a father to them; as he also is to the rest that are under his care, he having a paternal affection for them, and a fatherly regard to them: he lays up for them on week-days, as parents do for their children, and then he freely spends it on them on Lord's-days, and most gladly spends, and is spent, for them; though the more he loves, the less is he loved by them. And, O how does he exhort, comfort, and charge them, as a father does his children! and therefore when he is removed from them by death, who can blame them for weeping and crying out,

A SERMON ON THE DEATH OF

My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! Likewise he stands in the relation of a Shepherd to them; as he is their father, and they his family, he is their pastor, and they his flock, whom he has willingly took the oversight and charge of; and whom he feeds with knowledge and understanding, and watches over, and for their souls, that he may give an account of them with joy, and not with grief; and when therefore he is taken from them, can it be otherwise, but that they must be filled with grief and sorrow on account of it?

3. The work of a gospel-minister, from which he is taken off by death, is such, that when it is seriously considered, and thoroughly thought of, will justly occasion sorrow in those among whom he has laboured. His business is to deliver out the pure gospel of Christ, to publish salvation by him, to proclaim peace by his blood, to preach pardon and righteousness through him, and every other important truth; to state and defend the same, and to shew the influence they have, and the argument they carry in them, to engage to holiness of life and conversation: and as he is highly to be esteemed of for his work sake, and to be accounted worthy of double honour, especially if he labours in the word and doctrine; and if he is a workman approved of God, and that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; as he will not fail of meeting with respect and value from those who love the truth, as it is in Jesus; so when he comes to die, and has done his work, his death will be bewailed for the same reason, for which he was highly esteemed in life.

4. The usefulness of a gospel-minister is another reason of sorrow with those to whom his labours of love have been acceptable and serviceable. Such an one is made use of by the Lord to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; to convert sinners from the evil of their ways, whereby souls are saved from death, and a multitude of sins covered; he is a minister by whom others believe in Christ, and have peace and comfort; the word preached by him is the means by which faith comes, and the holy Spirit with his several graces is received. He is a *Beanzeres*, a son of thunder, to some, to awaken and convince them of their sins, and of their dangerous state and condition by nature; and he is a *Barnabas*, a son of consolation, to others, through whose ministry their distressed minds are relieved, their disconsolate souls are comforted, their faith is increased, the joy of it furthered, and they are fed, nourished, refreshed, and edified: when therefore it is the pleasure of the Lord to call home such an useful servant of his, and take him off from his work and usefulness, and especially in the midst of it, it must be very afflicting and grieving, to such particularly, who have received much spiritual benefit and advantage by him.

5. It

5. It increases the sorrow, when at such a time as this, a gospel-minister is removed, in which there are not many of that character, and so small a prospect of more. The harvest is great, and faithful and painful labourers are few. There are scarce any that naturally care for the estate and souls of men, and are heartily concerned for their spiritual and eternal welfare; all comparatively seek their own things, their honour and applause from men, their ease, reputation, and riches; and none, or few, the things that are Jesus Christ's, or relate to his honour, glory, kingdom and interest in the world: and what adds to the sorrow is, that there are so few rising up to fill up the places of those that are removed; few that come forth with the same spirit, and are zealously attached to the truths of the everlasting gospel: blessed be God, there is here and there one that promises usefulness, or otherwise the sorrow and grief, at the loss of gospel-ministers, would be insupportable.

To all which may be added, that a faithful minister of the gospel can be very ill spared at this time of day, when errors and heresies of all kinds are rampant among us; it is the last day, and there are many antichrists in the world, many false prophets are gone forth into it; there are many saying, *Lo here is Christ, and lo there;* to the great confusion and distraction of the weak and simple. These come not in privily, as they formerly did, bringing in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them; but openly spread their poison, and declare for their wretched schemes with fury and rancour, charitably scattering firebrands, arrows, and death; raging waves of the sea they are, foaming out their own shame; there is scarce an error or heresy that has appeared in the world from the first ages of christianity, but what is revived in this; and there is no truth of the gospel, but what is opposed and denied: and to lose an able and zealous defender of them, at such a time as this, is a double loss, and cannot fail of affecting the minds of such who heartily espouse the Redeemer's cause. But,

IV. Give me leave to offer some few things to prevent immoderate sorrow, to restrain grief, and keep it within due bounds and limits; though it is lawful, and there is cause for it, yet care should be taken that it is not exceeded, and even in this your particular case, who have so lately lost your dear pastor. And,

1. Let it be observed, that it is the will of God that so it should be, and you ought to acquiesce in it; the will of the Lord is done, and it cannot be undone: when the disciples had endeavoured to dissuade the apostle from going up to Jerusalem, and could not prevail, they ceased, saying, *The will of the Lord be done:* so you have been praying and intreating the Lord to spare the life of your pastor, but he has not thought fit to grant your request; and it now becomes you to cease, and be still, and not complain and murmur, since the will

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of the Lord is done; who does all things not only after his own will, but after the *counsel* of it; he does all things well and wisely, for the best, for his own glory, and his people's good; and there is nothing in which you can more imitate Christ, and be like unto him, than by resigning your wills to the will of God, who said, *not my will, but thine be done*^p; you should remember that God is a sovereign, and must be submitted to: he “does according to his will in heaven above, and in the earth below, and none can stay his hand, nor ought any to say to him, what doest thou?” Good old *Eli* said, with respect to a case more afflicting, more distressing, and more severe than yours, *it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*^q; he has a right to do what he will with his own, and he does so without giving any account of his matters to the children of men: the Lord gave you your minister, and he gave him his gifts for the ministry, and all his usefulness was owing to him; and now he has taken him away; and you should be still, and know, own, and acknowledge that he is a sovereign God, and does as he pleases; and, with *David*, it becomes you to be dumb, and not open your mouth in a way of complaint against him, because he has done it.

2. Your minister's work was done, which was appointed for him to do. There is nothing that more manifestly falls under the decrees and determinations of heaven, than a minister's life and work; it is appointed of God where he shall minister, to whom, and how long; how many souls shall be converted by him, and what comforts shall be administered through his means, and to what length of time he must continue in his service. Now there was not one sinner more to be converted by your minister, nor any more comforts to be conveyed to you through his hands; all the work that was cut out for him was done by him: but this cannot be better expressed than in his own words; and because these will, in all probability, have a greater influence upon you, and more weight with you than any thing I can say, give me leave to read a passage or two out of a discourse^r, published by him. “God, says he, never calls home an useful minister till his work is done, till every sinner is brought in, whom he was in any degree to be instrumental to awaken, convince, or direct to Jesus; and till every saint is so far instructed, edified, and comforted by him, as was settled and agreed in the divine counsels, when God was pleased to determine and appoint, that he should be called to labour in his vineyard.—And as all the names of the elect are particularly set down in the Lamb's book of life, so under-shepherds are sent forth by the great Lord of the harvest, who, as he assigns them their work, so he has settled every circumstance relating to it; how long each shall be employed, and when he is to be removed to make way for a successor: how far he shall be owned, and succeeded; what temptations

^p Luke xxii. 42.

^q 1 Sam. iii. 18.

^r Psalm xlvi. 10. and xxxix. 9.

* The Blessing of a Gospel-ministry, &c. p. 30, 32—34.

"tations and difficulties will attend him ; what discouragements he will meet with, and how he shall be supported and carried through it, in the midst of all opposition, till his warfare is accomplished, and his work is finished.—We are ready to entertain hard thoughts of God, continues your dear Pastor, and to open our mouths against heaven, when he is pleased to take away a minister whom we valued, in the bloom or meridian of life, especially if he is called off when we think he was best furnished for, and had the greatest run of success in his work ; not considering that one reason why he was so very useful, whilst with us, was, because his work was to be cut short in righteousness, and his stay upon earth limited to a few years : it is not so material how long ministers are continued with us, as how useful they are to us, whilst that is our mercy. God can easily dispatch a great deal of work by his servants, in a little time ; and if he is then pleased to dismiss them, the advantage is theirs, by being taken the sooner to regions of everlasting rest and triumph.—This should serve then, adds he, to still our murmurings, and hush our complaints, even though we should lose a minister dearer to us than the apple of our eye : let us remember he had his particular work to do, that now his work is finished and compleated ; and when this is the case, what can be more merciful than for a faithful servant to enter into the joy of his Lord ?"

3. *The residue of the Spirit is with the Lord*; Christ your ascended Lord and King has received gifts for men, yea for rebellious ones ; and he has a fulness of them in his hands, which he can give, if he pleases, to others to fit them for the work of the ministry ; that they may be useful for the perfecting or gathering in of the saints, and for the edifying the body the church : instead therefore of mourning over the death of your pastor, especially in an immoderate way, be praying to the Lord of the harvest to send a faithful labourer into this part of his vineyard ; and who knows what a blessing is in reserve for you? Your *Elijah* is gone ; it may be, a double portion of his spirit may fall upon some *Elisha* or another, who may be sent to you.

4. Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, lives, and will live for evermore, to protect, defend, and provide for you ; though your spiritual father is gone, your everlasting Father, on whose shoulders the government of the church is, continues ; though the under-shepherd is removed from you, the chief and great shepherd, and bishop of your souls, is still the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; an everlasting friend, that sticks closer than a brother. And moreover, though the fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever? No ; they do not, yet the word of God lives and abides for ever : the gospel is an everlasting gospel, and there will be men to preach it to the end of the world. Christ has promised his presence with his ministers.

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so long, which supposes that they will be continued to the end of all things. Christ has, and ever will have a standing ministry in the world, until all his elect are gathered in, and "these are come to the unity of the faith, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

5. It should be observed by you, that what is your loss, is your minister's gain; he is taken away, perhaps from evil to come; he is safe housed before the storm falls upon the churches and ministers of Christ, which seems to be gathering thick; and can you be sorry for that? could you have seen the saint when he entered into the joy of his Lord, clad with robes of immortality and bliss, how he was received into the Father's presence, embraced in the arms, and laid in the bosom of Jesus, and the Spirit of glory resting on him; could you now view him, as you have reason to believe he is, inheriting the throne of glory, with the crown of righteousness on him, encircled with the glorious forms of angels and fellow-saints made perfect, it would surely bid you wipe off your tears, and dry your eyes. To all which I would only add, that though you will see his face no more in this world, which is the cause of your present sorrowing, you will see it in another; he will rise again in the resurrection of the just, and you that believe in Christ will rise too, when the dead in Christ shall rise first; and then he and you will meet, and be with the Lord, be for ever with him; with which words you should comfort one another. Your minister will appear at the head of you, to whom he has been a spiritual father, and you will be then his joy and crown of rejoicing; he will look upon you with pleasure, and you will see his face to great advantage, which will then be as the face of an angel, and shine like the sun in the Father's kingdom; for *they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever*^{*}. Thus have I gone through what I proposed; and there is nothing remains now but to give you the character of my deceased brother, and your pastor, which I suppose is expected from me: and here I want the eloquence of the deceased to paint him out in his proper colours, and to describe him as the accomplished man, the real christian, and excellent minister. Something I shall attempt to do, and you that knew him most intimately, will supply the rest in your minds, from your own observation.

The Reverend Mr SAMUEL WILSON, descended from godly ministers of the denomination of Protestant Dissenters, both by father and mother's side. He was the son of the Reverend Mr EBENEZER WILSON, a worthy minister of Christ in this city; whose father also was an eminent preacher of the gospel, at Hitchin

in

* Dan. xii. 3.

in Hertfordshire ; and as he had a religious, so a liberal education. His grammar and classical learning, he received under some of the best masters of it¹, in this city : his academical studies he went through, under the direction of Dr Ridgely and Mr Eames, under whom he made great advances in polite and useful literature ; with which being furnished, he shone out and made that figure in the church and world, he afterwards did.

His natural parts were very quick and strong ; he had great vivacity of spirit, a lively fancy and imagination, a retentive memory, a penetrating mind, and a solid judgment ; which, with the above advantages of human literature, and above all, having the grace of God bestowed upon him, and spiritual light and knowledge given him in the mysteries of the gospel, made him the great man he was.

He was favoured with many preservations and providential deliverances, in his infancy and younger years, when life was in danger : which he has remarked with his own hand², as expressive of the tender care of providence over him, and no doubt the Lord saved him, in order to call him by his grace, reveal his Son in him, and make him an able minister of the New Testament.

He received his first serious impressions, under the ministry of the late Rev. Mr Daniel Wilcox, an eminent minister of the Presbyterian denomination in this city ; as he himself relates in a discourse³ he published on occasion of the death of that minister, upon the same words which I have been treating of : and that he was truly a partaker of the grace of God, was not only the judgment of the church to whom he first gave up himself, but will easily be admitted by all good men that have known him, heard him, or read him. And it was your happiness as a church, that you had such a minister, who himself bad tasted that the Lord was gracious : an unregenerate ministry has been the bane of the Established church, and is like to be the ruin of the Protestant dissenting interest.

Though the father and grandfather of our deceased brother were both of the Baptist denomination, yet it was not this that determined him to become of the same persuasion himself ; besides, his father dying when he was young, he was under another influence ; and when he entered upon the inquiry about baptism, no one, he himself says, could enter into it with a more earnest desire, to find truth on the side of the common practice, all his conversation and prospects leaning strongly that way ; but, upon taking the method which he did to search the scriptures, collect the whole evidence from them, and consider every part separately,

¹ Dr Hay, an eminent clergyman, and Professor Ward of Gresham-College.

² In a bloody-flux ; when cut near the eye by a catstick ; when swimming in a mill-pond — wading through a river once and again, &c. MS. penes me.

³ The Blessing of a Gospel-ministry, &c. p. 3.

of his office, visiting the church and members of it, without respect of persons; fervent in his prayers for them, and with them ; hearty in his advice unto them, and unwearied in doing any service for them he undertook. And let me not forget his conduct at your church-meetings, where he presided, becoming his character and office ; what authority he used when necessary ; what prudence in all things ; what patience in bearing with the infirmities of the weak, and it may be sometimes the rudeness of some, and the invectives of others ; what lenity to offenders ; what compassion to backsliders ; what reluctance to pass the awful sentence on the incorrigible, and with what tears in prayer he would weep over such unhappy professors !

His gift in prayer was very remarkable and extraordinary ; with what fulness of matter, freedom of mind, and fervour of spirit, as well as pertinency of expression, and propriety of language, would he pour out his soul before God, and wrestle with him ; what a compass would he fetch, and reach every case, both private and public ; and not only express the sense of his own heart, but that of others that joined with him, in a better and fuller manner, than they could do it for themselves.

He was affable and courteous in his behaviour to all men, of a cheerful spirit, his conversation pleasant, profitable, entertaining, and useful : which made him generally beloved by all sorts of persons. In social life, he was the tender husband, the affectionate father, and the faithful friend.

In his last illness he was seized at first with such a stupor, as rendered him very little conversible during the whole time ; so that nothing of his gracious experience could be taken from him, only some broken words and expressions now and then were dropped by him, which shewed him to be in a spiritual frame : but from a small manuscript, written by him in health, I shall give a few extracts, in which he not only expresses his sense of mercies, temporal and spiritual, but observes the gracious dealings of God with him, and his experience of his divine favour. “ I have had, says he, many sweet visits of his “ love, especially in secret, and at his table. God, in Christ, adds he, I hope “ is my portion, his providence my defence, and his good Spirit my guide and “ comforter.” And in another place, he expresses his sense of the corruption of his heart, the infirmities of his life, his faith and hope in a bleeding Saviour, and his desires after unspotted purity and holiness ; he complains of “ a polluted, proud, peevish heart, prone to atheism, folly, and every evil—and of “ a life tarnished with many blemishes, sad indiscretions, and heart-breaking “ ingratitude—surely, says he, God hath hardly done more for any, nor any “ left to do more against him !—then expresses an hope limited to a bleeding “ mediator—and concludes, blessed day that will bring perfect purity.” Which

day is come to him, and has brought it to him. A word or two more, and I have done.

To you, the mournful widow of the deceased, give me leave to say, your loss is indeed great; you have lost a kind and indulgent husband; but remember, Christ your spiritual husband lives; and from him, and his love, you can never be separated; put your trust in him, he will *never leave you nor forsake you*. To you his dear offspring, whom he most affectionately loved, you have lost one who has been, and still would have been, the guide of your youth, and constant monitor; follow his example, remember his instructions; shun the pleasures of sin, and the vanities of this world; flee youthful lusts; seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and serve your father's God, and things will be well with you. And to you, this church of Christ, among whom he has ministered many years, I would only say, abide by the truths he preached to you; imitate him in every thing praiseworthy, and of good report; you have lost your shepherd, keep close to one another, and do not scatter and stray from the fold; preserve the order and discipline of Christ's house; seek peace and pursue it, unite in your counsels, be frequent and fervent in prayer; and I doubt not but in due time, God will send you a pastor to feed you with knowledge, and with understanding.

S E R M O N XXX.

Occasioned by the Death of BENJAMIN SEWARD, Esq; Preached April 8, 1753.

P S A L . XXXVII. 37.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.

THE occasion of my reading these words to you, at this time, is the decease of BENJAMIN SEWARD, Esq; late of Bengworth in Worcestershire. The last Lord's day he worshipped in public with saints below, was in this place; just five weeks ago. It is at the request of his surviving relations that I preach on this solemn occasion: no passage of scripture being left by the deceased

ceased for this purpose, and none given me by his friends ; but *this* being suggested to me by a relation ; and no other more proper to the occasion, or more suitable to the character of the deceased, occurring to my mind ; I determined to make use of it, and improve it in the best manner I can to your profit and edification.

The general view of the Psalmist in this psalm is to dissuade men truly good from envy, fretfulness, and impatience at the prosperity of the wicked ; and to exhort them to be still and quiet ; to wait patiently on the Lord, and trust in him ; shewing the care God takes of such, and the good things he does, or will bestow upon them ; and also the sure and sudden destruction of the wicked : a beautiful contrast between the righteous and the wicked may be observed throughout the whole psalm, and particularly in the text and context. *I have seen the wicked in great power*, says the Psalmist ; having in his mind, it is highly probable, some particular person, as *Saul*, or *Doeg the Edomite*, or *Abitophel*, or some such one, in great authority, in an exalted station of life, when he was in low circumstances : such an one *spreading himself like a green bay-tree*, in a very flourishing condition, in a seemingly settled state of outward felicity, and glorying in it, and striking terror into all around him : *yet he passed away, and lo he was not* ; either his power, and riches, and honour, were suddenly taken from him ; or he was taken by death from them, and was no more the man he had been ; or was no more in the land of the living : *yea I sought him, but he could not be found* ; in the place where he formerly was, that knowing him no more ; he could not be found on earth, from whence he was taken ; nor in heaven, where there is no place for such persons : he was gone to his own place, as is said of *Judas*, of whom *Jerom*, an antient writer, interprets the whole passage : but, on the other hand, *mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace* : observe the truly sincere and gracious man, in his character, principles, and practices ; trace him throughout the whole of his conversation ; view him in every light, in life, and at death ; and you will find the issue of all to be solid peace, prosperity and happiness. In the words may be observed,

- I. The character of a real good man, described as *perfect* and *upright*.
- II. The regard which is to be had unto him, he is to be *marked* and *observed*, *beheld*, looked at, and attentively considered.
- III. The reason assigned for this, and which is expressive of his future happiness ; *for the end of that man is peace*.
- IV. The character of a truly good man, who is described,

First, As perfect^a: some such there have been in all ages. *Noab was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God.* *Job was a perfect and upright man*; both the characters met in him which are given of the good man here. The apostle *Paul* spake the wisdom of God among them that were *perfect*^b; but the question is, in what sense they may be said to be perfect. And they are so both with respect to sanctification and justification.

1st, With respect to sanctification. This is what the people of God are chosen to as an end, and chosen through as a means of eternal happiness: it is called the *sanctification of the spirit*^c, because he is the author and efficient cause of it; if any man is *sanctified*, it is *in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God*^d: it lies in an implantation of principles of grace and holiness in the heart, and in the exercise of them, and appears in the outward walk and conversation. It is of so much importance and consequence, and so absolutely requisite to eternal life, that *without it no man shall see the Lord*^e, even without perfect holiness; and yet no man is so perfect in it, in the present state, as to be entirely free from sin, compleat in grace, or in-deficient in the discharge of duty.

1. Not so perfect as to be entirely free from sin. A good man is indeed free from the governing power of sin, under which he was before conversion. Sin is a king, a tyrant which reigns unto death; and to whose laws, which are lusts, men in a state of nature are voluntarily subject; they readily *serve divers lusts and pleasures*: but in conversion the power and force of sin is broken, and men are delivered from its thraldom and tyranny; they are translated into another kingdom, and are under another influence; they are not *under* the power of sin as a *law*, but *under grace* as a governing principle; and therefore *sin shall not have dominion over them*^f: it is indeed still in them, and has great power and prevalence at times; it threatens the ascendant over them, and sometimes so far prevails as to *lead them captive*; when *with their flesh*, or corrupt part, they *serve the law of sin*, though *with the mind or spiritual part the law of God*^g: they are also free from the damning power of sin, both original and actual; though they sinned in *Adam*, and the sentence of death passed on them; *judgment came upon all men*, and so on them *to condemnation*^h; and by their actual sins and transgressions they become obnoxious to the curse and condemnation

of

^a The Targum renders it, “**נָטַר שְׁלִימוֹת אָ** keep perfection, and behold uprightness.” The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, “keep innocence, and behold uprightness.” The Syriac version, “keep perfection, and chuse uprightness.” The Arabic version, “keep meekness, and “ thou shalt see uprightness.” The abstract is put for the concrete; perfection and uprightness for the perfect and upright man. ^b Gen. vi. 9. Job i. 1, 8. 1 Cor. ii. 6.

^c 2 Thess. ii. 13.

^d 1 Cor. vi. 11.

^e Heb. xii. 14.

^f Rom. vi. 14.

^g Rom. vii. 23, 25.

^h Rom. v. 12, 18.

of the law ; yet *there is*, *εδικασθαι μα*, “not one condemnation to them that are in “*Christ*¹.” were there as many sentences of condemnation as there are sins, not one of them can be executed on those that belong to Christ ; the reason is, because sin is condemned in his flesh ; he has bore the condemnation himself ; it has been executed upon him, and therefore *who or what shall condemn ? it is Christ that died*² ; and there is more virtue and efficacy in the blood and sacrifice of Christ to save, than there is in sin to damn. Moreover, upon the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, God does not impute sin to his people ; but he imputes the righteousness of his Son, by which they are justified from all their sins, and in that sense free from them ; but then, no man, no not the best of men, are free from the being of sin in them. The apostle Paul, that holy man, than whom no mere man on earth was more holy, speaks of his indwelling sin ; *it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*³ ; it was an inmate of his ; sin not only dwelled with him, but dwelled in him. John, the beloved disciple, says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*⁴ : and the apostle James put this question, *Do ye think the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy*⁵ ? and not only by the mouth of three such witnesses is this truth established, but by the experience of all the saints in all ages : sin is like the spreading leprosy in the house, which could not be cleansed of it, without pulling down every stick and stone ; sin will never be removed entirely from the saints, until this earthly house of their tabernacle is dissolved. Nor are they free from the actings of sin ; sin that dwells in them is always present with them ; when they would do good ; and often hinders them in the performance of it, so that they cannot do what they would ; and it puts them upon the doing of that which is evil. It is an observation made long ago, and it is to be remarked in all ages ; that *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not*⁶.

Every man sins in thought, word, or deed, and is continually sinning, even every good man. He daily sins in thought ; since the fall, *every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually*⁷. What evil thoughts are in it may be learnt in some measure by what comes out of it, which are expressed by the lips, and in actions ; and though when a man becomes a spiritual man, he becomes spiritually-minded, and thinks good thoughts, which he cannot do of himself, only under the influence of the grace of God, yet he is not always under that influence ; and though he hates vain thoughts, yet these lodge within him, of which he complains ; and there is no man that is capable of looking into his own heart, but must observe the vanity, folly, and impurity of his thoughts. He sins in word also, and very frequently : indeed, if *any man offend*

not

¹ Rom. viii. 1.

² Rom. viii. 3, 33.

³ Rom. vii. 20.

⁴ 1 John i. 8.

⁵ James iv. 5.

⁶ Eccles. vii. 20.

⁷ Gen. vi. 5.

not in word, the same is a perfect man¹; but where is the man to be found that does not offend God, his neighbour, and his own conscience, by his words, at one time or another? Let a man be as circumspect as he can; let him *keep his mouth as with a bridle*, as David did, and hold the reins ever so strait; let him be as wise as Solomon, some idle word, imprudent, unsavoury, and unbecoming expression or another will at times drop from him; and when provoked, let him be as patient as Job, and as meek as Moses, he will be tempted to *speak unadvisedly with his lips*: and as to deeds or actions, *who can understand his errors*; they are so many? *in many things we all offend*² or fall; fall into sin, as the righteous man does, seven times a day; and he would fall oftener, did not the Lord uphold him: and the true reason why he does not fall totally and finally, is, because he is in the arms of everlasting love, secured in the covenant of grace, kept by the power of God, and is in the hands of Christ, who is able to keep him from falling.

That the best of men are not entirely free from sin, and the commission of it, in this life, is clear from their confessions of it; none are more frequent at confession of sin, or more free and ingenuous in it than they are; yea, even such who in a proper sense may be said to be *perfect*. Plain-hearted Jacob owns, that *few and evil had been the days of the years of his pilgrimage*³. Job, that perfect and upright man, says, *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men*⁴? David, the man after God's own heart, was often at this work; *I acknowledge my transgression*, says he, and *my sin is ever before me*⁵. The church in Isaiab's time confesses, *we have sinned—and are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*⁶. Daniel, that man greatly beloved of God, we read of confessing his sins, and the sins of his people⁷. And saints indeed find their account in so doing; for as it is promised, that *if men confess their sins, God will be faithful and forgive them*; so David attests it from his own experience; *I acknowledged my sin unto thee—and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*⁸. This is also evident from the continual war there is in good men; they find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and indeed, there is nothing to be seen in the *Schulamite*, in the *perfect one*⁹, as that word may be rendered, *but as it were the company of two armies*¹⁰; flesh and spirit, sin and grace set in battle array against each other: likewise, the same appears from the groans and complaints of the saints; one says; *There is no soundness in my flesh*

¹ James iii. 2.

² Psalm xxxix. 1.

³ Psalm cxi. 33.

⁴ Psalm xix. 12.

⁵ James iii. 2.

⁶ Gen. xlvi. 9.

⁷ Job vii. 20.

⁸ Psalm li. 3.

⁹ Isai. lxiv. 6.

¹⁰ Dan. ix. 4, 5, 20.

¹¹ Psalm xxxii. 5.

¹² From בְּלַע, compleri, perfici, Buxtorf.

¹³ Cant. vi. 13.

flesh—nor rest in my bones, because of my sin^c; another says, *we is me, I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips^d*; a third says, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death^e!* and all agree and join in this, *We that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened^b with the weight of sin and corruption;* and so they do and will, as long as they are in the tabernacle of the body. Once more, this is plain and manifest from the prayers of good men, that God would cleanse them from secret faults; keep them back from presumptuous sins; pardon their iniquities, for they are great; blot them out, according to the multitude of his tender mercies; purge and wash them, that they might be whiter than snow^f. And our Lord, knowing that his disciples sinned, and would sin daily, taught them to ask for the forgiveness of their sins, for the application of pardoning grace to them, as often as they asked for their bread, even their daily bread^g; yea, it is easy to observe, that those very men, said to be perfect, were not without sin: and though it is not pleasing to rake into the sins of good men, yet since these stand on record, to teach us that there is no absolute perfection in the best of men, and to encourage us, notwithstanding our sins and imperfections, to hope for acceptance with God through Christ, as they had, it cannot be wrong to observe them. Thus *Noab*, who was a perfect man, was guilty of intemperance; *Job*, another perfect man, when convinced of his evil, abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes; and it may be remarked, that frequently good men fail in that very thing for which they have been most eminent: thus *Abraham* was famous for his faith, being the father of them that believe; and yet the principal failure recorded of him is, his unbelief and distrust of the care of divine providence over him, which put him on saying, *Sarab was his sister.* *Moses* was the meekest man on earth, and yet spoke very rashly and hastily; *ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?*^h You have heard of the patience of *Job*, and how eminent he was for that; and yet, what great impatience was he guilty of when he cursed the day of his birth? *Solomon* was the wisest of men, and yet never man acted so foolish a part, to be drawn into such gross idolatry as he was by his wives.

2. Nor are any good men so perfect as to be compleat in the exercise of grace. All grace indeed is feminally in the heart at once; the Spirit of God, the author of it, is given at once; Christ formed in the heart, the subject-matter of it, is done at once; all grace is implanted at one and the same time: it is a seed which is cast into the heart, and there abides; where there is one grace, there is every grace; where there is faith, there is hope; and where there is hope, there is faith; and where there are both faith and hope, there is love: as there is a strict connection between vices, where there is

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^a Psalm xxxviii. 3.

^f Isa. vi. 5.

^g Rom. vii. 24.

^h 2 Cor. v. 4.

^b Psalm xix. 12, 13. and xxv. 11. and li. 1, 7, 9. ^c Mat. vi. 11, 12. ^d Numb. xx. 10.

one, there are all; though they are not all in act in every one, yet the seeds of all sin are in every man; such a connection there is between the graces of the Spirit, where one is, all are. They may not indeed be in exercise together, at least to the same degree; a man can truly say he loves Christ, when he cannot say, *my beloved is mine, and I am his*^m; which is a strong expression of faith: there may be hope of eternal salvation by him, when a man is not able to say with Job, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*ⁿ: one grace may be more visible than another, as to exercise; repentance may be discoverable when faith is not, yet there is no true repentance without it: a man first looks to Christ by faith, and then mourns and repents in an evangelical manner; whence it has been said, that “repentance is a tear that drops from the eye of faith.” Yet though they are all seminally cast into the heart at once, like seed they spring up, and arrive to maturity by degrees; grace is like seed, which first springs up in the stalk, and then appears in the ear, and at last in the full corn in the ear: it is with men in grace, as it is with them in nature, they are first children, then young men, and then fathers; and there is at first a perfection of parts, though not of degrees; as in a new-born infant, that has its proper shape, and all its members, it is perfect in all its parts; but not yet grown up to a perfect man; that is, by degrees: and so one born again is a new creature, and has all the parts of one, a new heart, and a new spirit, new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new hands to work with, new feet to walk with; but as yet not *come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*^o.

If we consider the several graces of the Spirit, it will appear that they are not in perfection as to exercise. Saving, spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, and divine things, is a considerable part of sanctification; and the apostle says, *in understanding be ye men, or be ye, πλεον, “perfect”*:^p There are means, such as reading, hearing, praying, and meditating, to be used, in order to a greater degree of it; and truly gracious souls will not stick or rest satisfied in the first measure of knowledge, but *leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, will go on unto perfection*^q; and yet come short of it in the present state. Some may have a greater degree of it than others, and be comparatively perfect; and in this sense we are to understand some passages^r, which speak of men as perfect: and they are such who have their spiritual *senses exercised*, being of *full age*^s; have a clearer sight of Christ; a quicker hearing of his voice, so as to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; a better relish and taste of the grace of God, and more skill in handling the word of life; and yet those that know the most, *know but in part*, as even the apostle Paul, who knew so much of Christ, and him crucified; yet desired to know more, and did not think he had

^m Cant. ii. 16.

ⁿ Job xix. 25.

^o Ephes. iv. 13.

^p 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

^q Heb. vi. 1.

^r 1 Cor. iii. 6. Phil. iii. 15.

^s Heb. v. 14.

had already attained to a perfection of it, though he greatly desired it, and pressed after it; but this is reserved to another state, when we shall see no more through a glass darkly, but face to face, and know as we are known¹. Faith is another part of sanctification, and so considerable a one, that men are said to be sanctified by it². This, when unfeigned, true, and genuine, may be said to be perfect; and in that sense is opposed to an hypocritical faith, a mere profession of it; and which is but a bare assent to things, and but temporary; and in this sense it is said to be made perfect by works³; that is, to be declared true and genuine, by its working by love to God, Christ, and his people, and by being attended with works of righteousness done from right principles, and with right views: and in some it is to a greater degree than in others; for though all have like precious faith⁴, as to its nature, object, and use, yet not as to exercise; some are strong in faith, and others weak, but in none is it absolutely perfect; there are some, ~~as unigenitae~~, deficiencies, or things lacking in it to be perfected⁵: even in Abraham himself it was not perfect, as appears by his acts of unbelief, before hinted at; nor in Peter, a man so famous for his faith in Christ, who is complained of by him at a certain time as of little faith⁶; and all the disciples saw reason to use such a petition, Lord increase our faith⁷: and in those who may arrive to a full assurance of faith, I greatly question whether it is always in full exercise; even in these may arise some doubts and hesitations, though they may continue but for a short time, which cause some perturbation and uneasiness in them. Hope, that lively grace, which is in exercise when others are not, yet sometimes is so reduced as that a man puts his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; yea says, my strength and my hope are perished from the Lord⁸: and there is always need of the power of the holy Spirit to be afresh exerted, to cause a sinner to abound in the exercise of this grace. Love, which is sometimes very ardent and fervent, waxes cold; first love is left, though not lost; and though it may be made perfect⁹, that is, declared to be true and genuine, yet is not absolutely perfect, but has its allays. The same may be observed of patience, humility, and self-denial, and every other grace.

That believers are not compleatly perfect in grace, is evident from their standing in need of fresh supplies of it: as they are poor and needy, and find themselves so, there is a throne of grace provided for them continually to come unto for grace, to help them in time of need; and they are encouraged to expect it from the promise of God, that he will give more grace to the humble, and supply all the need of his people, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ¹⁰. More-

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¹ Cor. xiii. 9, 12. Phil. iii. 10—14.² Acts xxvi. 18.³ James ii. 22.⁴ 2 Pet. i. 1.⁵ 1 Thess. iii. 10.⁶ Matt. xiv. 31.⁷ Luke xvii. 5.⁸ Lam. iii. 19.⁹ John iv. 17.¹⁰ Heb. iv. 16. James iv. 7. Phil. iv. 19.

over, this is still more evident from the saints disclaiming perfection in the present state; and even such who in some sense are said to be perfect; as *Job*, who expresses himself thus, *if I say I am perfect, it (my mouth) shall prove me perverse*^a. *David* says, he had seen *an end of all perfection*^f; which he judged unattainable by him, because of the largeness and spirituality of the law. And the apostle *Paul*, who had as large a measure of grace as ever any mere man had, yet says, *not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect*^g; and which may be further confirmed from the eager desires and earnest endeavours of the saints after it.

3. Nor are they so perfect as to be indeficient in the performance of duty: how backward are they oftentimes unto it? none stir up themselves to diligence in it, but make idle excuses to free them from an attendance on it; saying as the church, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them*^b? What, sleepiness and drowsiness attend them in it! as in the disciples, who could not watch one hour with Christ; *the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak*ⁱ: when duties are performed in the best manner, there are such defects in them, as that saints are ashamed of them; and so far from concluding any merit in them, that they judge themselves *unprofitable servants*^k on account of them: there is the *iniquity of their holy things*; sins in their most solemn and religious performances; for the atonement of which, provision is made in Christ, their antitypical *Aaron*, who has bore them, and satisfied for them: in a word, though they are desirous of *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*^l, they come short of it.

Upon the whole, it may be seen by all this, in what sense the saints are perfect as to their sanctification, and in what sense not; they may be said to be perfect, as they are sincere, and their grace true and genuine, which is the frequent sense of the word here used. It is said of *Jacob*, that he was a *plain man*, where is the same word^m as here; he was an honest, plain-hearted, sincere man, and in such sense perfect; as all those are, who have received the grace of God in truth; who have the *root of the matter* in them; whose faith is unfeigned, whose hope is without hypocrisy, and whose love is without dissimulation. They are not absolutely, but comparatively perfect; in comparison of what they were themselves before conversion; in comparison of what others are who are walking in the vanity of their minds; in comparison of hypocrites, and formal professors; in comparison of such who are only outwardly righteous before men; and some are so in comparison of other real christians, having a larger degree of knowledge, faith and experience. They are perfect, not in themselves, but in Christ, *in whom they are sanctified*; and who is *made unto them sanctification*,

^a Job ix. 20.

^f Psal. cxix. 96.

^g Phil. iii. 12.

^h Cant. v. 3.

^b Matt. xxvi. 41.

^k Luke xvii. 10.

^l 2 Cor. vii. 1.

^m □n.

sion^a, as well as other things ; who has the whole stock and fund of grace and holiness in him for them, from whence they *receive grace for grace*^b : so that though they are at present imperfectly sanctified, the *God of peace will sanctify them wholly* ; the Spirit of God from Christ will finish his work of grace and holiness on them at the hour of death, and make them perfectly meet for the enjoyment of the divine presence.

2dly, They may be said to be perfect with respect to their justification. We read of *perfect men in Christ*, and of the saints being *compleat in him*, the head of all principality and power, and of their being *perfected by him*^c ; all which respects their justification through his righteousness. He has perfectly redeemed them from all sin, and from the curse and condemnation of the law : he is a *rock*, and this *work of his is perfect*^d ; it is finished, and an *eternal redemption*^e it is ; the efficacy and fruits of it will always continue, and it needs nothing to be added to it. Christ has made full atonement for the sins of his people ; he has bore them all, and took them away ; he has *put them away by the sacrifice of himself* ; he has *finished, and made an end*^f of them, that they are no more ; he has procured an entire pardon of them ; God, for Christ's sake, forgives *all trespasses* ; he heals all diseases, and forgives all iniquities ; the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin ; he has fulfilled the whole law in the room and stead of his people ; that requires and demands perfect obedience, and nothing short of that will it allow to be a righteousness ; but curses such who continue not in all things to do them. Now what the law could not, or men could not do in obedience to the law, through the weakness of the flesh, God has sent his own Son, made under the law, to fulfil it, in the room and stead of his people, that so it might be fulfilled in them ; and accordingly he has fulfilled it, and is the fulfilling *end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes* : and thus having brought in a perfect and everlasting righteousness, which is commensurate to the demands of law and justice ; whereby justice is satisfied, the law magnified and made honourable, and this accepted of God, and imputed to his people ; they are completely justified from all sin, and secure from all wrath and condemnation. They are in this sense so perfect, that no sin is to be seen in them, or found upon them, for they are covered with Christ's righteousness, out of the sight of avenging justice. Though God sees all sin in his omniscience, and chastizes and corrects for it in his providence ; yet in the business of justification he sees *no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel*^g : when the sins of these are sought for, they shall not be found, because they are pardoned ; they are covered with the blood and righteousness of Christ ; they are removed from them to him, and from him,

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^a 1 Cor. i. 2, 30.^b 1 Thess. v. 23.^c Colos. i. 28. and ii. 10. Heb. x. 14.^d Deut. xxxii. 4.^e Heb. ix. 14.^f Heb. ix. 26. Dan. ix. 24.^g Numb. xxiii. 21.

by his satisfaction for them, as far as the east is from the west; they are cast by the Lord behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, never more to be brought against them to their condemnation: in this sense they are perfect, or without blemish, as a word of the same root signifies, and is sometimes so rendered¹: they are the undefiled in the way, unblameable and irreprovable in the sight of God, without fault before the throne. As to their sanctification, they are like the moon, which has its spots; but with respect to their justification, they are *clear as the sun*²; being clothed with the sun of righteousness, and so without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; they are all fair, and there is no spot in them; they are a perfection of beauty, made perfectly comely, through that comeliness which Christ has put upon them; and so will be presented to himself, and to his divine Father another day, and at present are acceptable in his sight.

Secondly, Another character of truly good men is that of *upright*: As I have been so large upon the former, I shall say the less to this, and the rather, as there is a very great agreement between them; for an *upright* man is one that has the uprightness or righteousness of Christ shewn unto him, and put upon him: if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness³; not the uprightness of the man himself, at least not his own external righteousness; but either the strict justice of God requiring satisfaction for sin; or rather the satisfactory righteousness of Christ, the messenger and interpreter, one among a thousand⁴. This is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, and is brought near, and shewn unto a sensible sinner, by the blessed Spirit, who works faith in him to receive it, and to walk in this uprightness. Again, an upright man is one that is *upright in heart*⁵; who has a right spirit renewed in him; is an Israelite indeed; is right at heart; deals uprightly and sincerely with God and men; draws nigh to God with a true heart, and whose heart agrees with his mouth, and his actions with both: he is one that walks *uprightly*⁶; that walks by faith in Christ, as he has received him, and as he has him, also, for an example; he walks according to the rule of the word, and has respect to all the commandments, and walks in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless. If there is any difference between these two words, *perfect* and *upright*; the one may design the inward disposition of the soul, the sincerity:

¹ מְמֻנָּה, αμυνθή, Sept. in Lev. i. 3.

² Cant. vi. 10.

³ Job xxxiii. 23.

⁴ Ad officium Christi prophetica pertinet, ut iudicet homini, per verbum externe, per spiritum interne, יְתִשְׁעֵי rectitudinem suam: quod intelligi potest, vel de rectitudine Dei exigentis satisfactionem pro peccatis, & castigantis etiam electos suos propter ea: vel de rectitudine ipsius Christi, id est, justitia sua satisfactoria, quæ unica salutis nostræ meritoria causa est: vel denique de rectitudine hominis, id est, praxi fidei & resipiscientiae. Nihil horum omnium est, quod suos Christus non doceat. Withus de Oeconomia Foederum, l. 4. c. 3. §. 33. p. 464.

⁵ Psal. xi. 2.

⁶ Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

sincerity of the heart, and the truth of grace there; and the other, the outward behaviour and conversation agreeable thereunto. I proceed to consider,

II. The regard that is to be had to such a man: He is to be *marked*, and observed, *beheld*, looked at, and attentively considered. Mark and observe how this man came to be *perfect* and *upright*; since, though God made man so, he sinned, and lost his perfection and uprightness: seeing that man now is a corrupt and depraved creature, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; *there is none righteous and good, no not one; all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Let it be observed and remarked then, that the perfect and upright man comes to be so by the grace of God, by which alone he is what he is; and by receiving grace out of the fulness which is in Christ, and by the Spirit of God and his grace; for all this is not by might or power of man, but by the spirit and grace of God. Mark and observe such men, and look upon them with wonder and admiration; they are so many instances of the marvellous loving-kindness of God, of his amazing grace, and wondrous power; they are like *Isaiab* and his children, or rather like Christ and his; they are *for signs and wonders*; and as *Joshua* and his fellows, who were men wondered at^b. It is astonishing, that sinful creatures, so sadly corrupted, should be made perfect and upright. Mark and observe such with great esteem and affection; for if you love God and Christ, you will love those that are begotten of them, and bear their image and likeness as these do: these are the precious sons of *Zion*; these are the excellent in the earth, in whom should be all your delight; and the more attentively you view them, the more you will love them: Mark and observe them as rare and uncommon persons, which are seldom to be found, and only here and there. *Noab* was perfect in the age in which he lived, but were there any other? we read of no more. *Job* was *perfect and upright*; but then there was *none like him* in all the earth, and therefore the Lord would have him considered. There are but few, in all ages, whose persons and garments are undefiled, or who are such perfect and upright men. Mark and observe them, so as to imitate them; be followers of them, so far as they are followers of Christ; walk as they do, and as you have them for an example: we should be followers and imitators of them, *who through faith and patience have inherited the promises.* Observe their conversation, how becoming the gospel of Christ it is; how by it they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour; how by the grace of God they have had it in the world; consider the end of their conversation, which issues in Christ, and in the glory of his name, and is to the honour of his interest. Take notice of their death, and the issue of it, and their end: this is not so generally considered as it should be; *the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth*

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it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come^c; that it is for their good they are removed, and that there are evil times coming on, they are taken from; it is to their profit and advantage, but to the loss of those who survive; who, as they live to see troublous times, want their presence, counsel and assistance: hence such a complaint from one that marked these things; Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men^d: the happy exit of such may deserve special regard and attention; which leads me to consider,

III. The reason assigned why such should be marked and observed, and which is expressive of their future happiness; *for the end of that man is peace; or there is an end to the man of peace*: and many versions render it, *the man of peace, or peaceable man^e*; particularly the Syriac version, *there is a good end to men of peace*; and so it carries on the description of the good man as a peaceable man. He is a man of peace, who enjoys much peace; the kingdom of God within him is peace and joy in the holy Ghost; he is filled with peace through believing in Christ; he has much peace with God through him, arising from a view of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; yea, *he is kept in perfect peace, having his mind stayed on the Lord, and his heart trusting in him*; he enjoys a peace which passeth all understanding, which he has in Christ, and from him, and amidst all the tribulations that attend him in this world; and which the world neither gives, nor takes away. He finds much peace of mind in waiting upon God, and worshipping him in the several duties of religion, both in private and public; in all the ways of Christ, which are *ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace*: he partakes of those joys and pleasures which a carnal man is a stranger to, and intermeddles not with. And he likewise follows after peace with all men, and after those things which make for it; he endeavours to cultivate it every where, in the church, and in the world; and as much as in him lies, and if possible, would live peaceably with all mankind; peace rules in his heart, and is the temper and disposition of his mind.

But the better reading of the words, and what gives the best sense of them, is, that the good man's *end is peace*; his *latter end*, as the word is sometimes rendered; the latter part of his life, as Job's was. Bildad told him, that were he pure and upright, his *latter end should greatly increase*; and as he was, so it did, *the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning*; in both which places the same word^f is used, as here: and sometimes the last days of a good

man

^c Isaiah lvii. 1.

^d Psalm xxi. 1.

^e לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם homini pacis, vel pacifico, Sept. Vulg. Lat. Arab.

^f אַחֲרִיתָה Job viii. 7. and xlvi. 12.

man are more peaceable, prosperous, and happy than the first part of his life is: but however, if this is not the case, if his tribulations continue to the end of his days, and through many he enters into the kingdom of heaven, peace is the issue of all; he goes away in peace, as old Simeon desired he might; and if not in a transport of joy, in a triumph over death and the grave, saying, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;* yet he goes off in serenity and tranquillity of mind, trusting in the Redeemer, and desirous of being with him. And as soon as he is departed, he enters into peace, into the joy of his Lord; into his presence, *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore.* There will be nothing then to disturb his peace; no *pricking briar, nor grieving thorn;* in all the heavenly country he is gone into; no more sin and corruption in his own heart to distress him; no more any of Satan's temptations to annoy him; no more of the reproach, rage, and persecutions of wicked men to molest him; *there the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest:* there is every thing that contributes to peace; there is the God of peace, that will be with him for ever; there is the Prince of peace, that has made peace for him by his blood; there is the holy Spirit, whose fruit is peace; there are the angels of peace, who at Christ's incarnation sung *glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will unto men;* and there are the saints, the sons of peace, with whom he shall live for ever: and there will be every thing that can come under the notion of peace and happiness; there will be perfect health of body and soul, and length of days, for ever and ever; no more pain, sickness, sorrow, and death; there will be riches and honour; riches of glory, an eternal weight of glory, a crown and throne of glory, an everlasting kingdom, prepared from the foundation of the world; a paradise of pleasure, bliss, and joy, inconceivable and inexpressible. This is the end of the perfect and upright man.

Now if any man may be said to be *perfect and upright*, in the sense in which I have explained these characters, as I doubt not there are many, the person whose death has occasioned this discourse may be said to be the man; and who was an ornament to the *Dissenting interest* in general, and to the *Baptist denomination* in particular, of which denomination he was.

I fear I shall not be able to do justice to the character of this worthy gentleman, for want of sufficient knowledge of him; for though I have had the honour to be acquainted with him for some years past; yet by reason of distance of habitation, and having but seldom an opportunity of conversation with him,

I am

^a 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

^b Ezek. xxviii. 24.

^c Job iii. 17.

^d Luke ii. 14..

I am not so well qualified to give you his true portrait, as a gentleman and a christian; however, what from my own observation, and the information of others, I will give you the best account of him I can.

Mr SEWARD was a gentleman of fine natural parts and good sense; he had a peculiar sweetness of temper, scarce ever known to be ruffled, discomposed, fretful and impatient, upon any occasion; which singular good nature, as it is commonly called, adorned with the grace of God, set him in a most amiable light, and caused him to shine in a most pleasing manner to all that knew him. He had the advantage of a liberal education, first begun in *Westminster* school, and then carried on in the University of *Cambridge*; where, as I am informed, he took a degree, and was designed for service in the Established Church, in which he was brought up; but this was frustrated by a call in Providence from thence to another employment in life.

When it pleased God effectually to call him by his grace, through consulting the sacred scriptures, and his own experience, as well as the writings of learned and godly men, he embraced and professed a set of principles, glorious in themselves, calculated to secure and increase spiritual peace and comfort, and to promote true and undefiled religion, and powerful godliness; and upon the same plan he received the doctrine of adult baptism, and submitted to the ordinance of it, an ordinance greatly despised by men; in which he acted the self-denying part, as well as in joining himself in the communion of a small society of christians, of the Baptist denomination, mean and despicable in the eyes of men; and this he publicly did before the whole world, as not being ashamed of Christ, his gospel, ordinances and people; *esteeming reproach for Christ's sake greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt.*

Humility, that truly christian grace, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which so much adorns the believer, was eminently conspicuous in him; he was affable and courteous to the meanest person; would condescend to men of low estate, and submit to those that were inferior to him, *esteeming others better than himself*; not elated either with the affluence of life he was possessed of, or with his natural or acquired abilities, or his spiritual gifts; knowing from whom he received them; and therefore would not glory as though he had received them not.

As he was blessed with plenty of this world's good things, and so capable of relieving the distressed; his ears were open to the cries and requests of the poor; his heart sympathized with them in their troubles; his hand was ready to distribute to their necessities; he was a cheerful giver, and took delight in every opportunity to do good; which he did to all, without respect to parties, having an heart benevolent to all mankind; which gained him the universal esteem of all that had knowledge of him.

In his last illness he was calm and sedate, still and quiet, patient, and perfectly submissive and resigned to the will of God; not at all reluctant to death, or in any fear of it; entirely dependent on Christ as his Saviour, and wholly looking to him for eternal life and salvation. In a visit I paid him, upon asking him how his faith stood, he replied, "his only view was to Jesus, and his trust was "in him, knowing there was no other way to life and happiness; but added, "that believing in Christ was a thing sometimes not so clear and manifest;" to which I replied, "it might be known, for *to them that believe, Christ is precious*; and as he is precious to every one that believes, so to whomsoever he "is precious, that man does believe, or has true faith in Christ." He observed, that this was an argument which he himself had made use of, to persuade some fearful christians that they did believe; and seemed greatly affected with it. I added, I hoped he would make use of the argument in his own favour. To a Reverend Minister¹ that afterwards visited him, he declared, "that could he "enjoy health and honour, and all the grandeur and good things of this world, "they would be all nothing to him in comparison of a well-grounded hope of "eternal glory and happiness." As he had no immediate apprehensions of death, till he was at once seized by it, nothing dropped from him concerning that,—the last words he was heard to utter in a broken and almost inarticulate manner, were, "*Dear Jesus,—Come—Come.*" Thus, without any violent struggle of nature, or any shew of concern and uneasiness at death, this precious servant of Christ fell asleep in Jesus.

The loss of him is great indeed! A loss to his surviving relative, to whom he was a most indulgent husband, a most delightful companion, and a sympathizing partner in her afflictions; may the Lord sanctify it to her, and support her under it! A loss to his dear children, to whom he was a tender and affectionate parent; who, by his bright example, hearty counsel, and wise directions and instructions, might have been of still greater advantage to them, had it pleased God to have continued him longer with them: May they tread in his steps, and copy after him! A loss to his poor neighbours and others, both in the church and in the world, to whom he was a cheerful benefactor. A loss to the whole interest of Christ, of which he was an ornament and support! He himself indeed is the gainer, and so is the church triumphant; which hereby has one more added to its shining number, which make that *general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.*

To conclude: Let it be inquired whether these characters of *perfect and upright* belong to you, that have been hearing this discourse: are you partakers of the true grace of God? Have you a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, a good hope through grace of salvation by him, and a sincere love unto him? Have you rea-

¹ The Rev. Mr Joseph Stennett, senior.

A SERMON ON THE DEATH

Son to believe that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to you, and you have interest in it, and are acceptable to God through it? Have you had clean hearts created, and right spirits renewed in you? And have you been enabled in any good measure to walk uprightly? And is it the desire of your souls, and the business of your lives to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men? Then, notwithstanding the imperfection that otherwise attends you, you are in a gospel-sense perfect and upright; and which you should ascribe to the grace of God, and be thankful for it.

Have you considered the men that bear these characters, as you should? When you behold them, do you find an affection for them, and does it create in you an esteem of them? Are you desirous of, and in some measure helped to imitate them, in whatsoever is praise-worthy in them? Have you observed the end of their conversation, and the issue of their holy lives, which is peace? Then may you hope that this also will be your end; which cannot but be a desirable one. Even Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous, and wished his last end might be like his^m: Such who truly believe in Christ, and look to him for righteousness and life, shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their soulsⁿ.

^m Numb. xxiii. 20.

ⁿ 1 Peter i. 9.

S E R M O N XXXI

CHRIST, *the Ransom Found.*

Occasioned by the Death of Mr JOHN DAVENPORT. Preached Oct. 13, 1754.

JOB XXXIII. 24.

Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.

THE occasion of my reading these words to you at this time, is the decease of Mr JOHN DAVENPORT, late member and deacon of this church; which by some circumstances were thought to be much upon his mind of late, and of singular use to him; and therefore were judged proper to be the subject of a funeral discourse.

The

The words are in strict connection with those that immediately go before; *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious, &c.* that is, if there be a messenger with God; or with the sick man; who is described in the preceding verses, 19—22. by the strong pain he is chastened with on his bed, with which all his bones are affected; by his nausea and abhorrence of food, even the most delicious and dainty; by the consumption of his flesh, being reduced to skin and bone, and so emaciated, that scarce any flesh is to be seen upon him; and his bones, which were covered with it, now stick out, and may easily be told; and by his near approach to the grave, and to the *destroyers*: not the destroying angels^a; rather, destroying diseases; so *Broughton* renders it, “killing maladies;” or it may be the worms^b, which in the grave destroy the flesh that remains, see chap. xix. 26. or else *death*s, the first and second, and the horrors and terrors of them^c. Now in such a case, and at such a season, if there be a proper, useful, assisting person at hand, it is well for the sick man; *if there be a messenger, or an angel*, as the word signifies: and some^d understand it of an angel by nature; one of those thousands, and ten thousands, that stand before God and minister unto him; one of those *ministering spirits that are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation*; who, as they perform good offices to them in life and health, so in sickness, and at the hour of death; when it is certain they are present with them, to take care of the separate spirit, and convoy it to heaven; and may be of use to suggest things comfortable to the mind of the sick person, and direct him what is right for him in such circumstances. This sense the Popish interpreters greedily catch at; though, should it be admitted, it would not follow, that because that angels may be of some use on sick-beds, and death-beds, that therefore they are to be invoked, prayed unto, and made use of as mediators between God and man; but I think this sense is to be rejected: and rather by the *messenger*, &c. is meant a minister of the word^e, who is by office an angel; hence we read of *the angels of the seven churches*^f, which are no other than the pastors of them; who have their mission and commission from God, to preach the gospel: and such an one is an *interpreter* of the scriptures, which he studies rightly to divide and explain; and of the mind and will of God in them, which he is favoured with, and enlightened into: and a spiritual, evangelical and faithful dispenser of the word is *one among a thousand*, scarce and rare; there are but few such, especially in times of declension, and in such places where the word of the Lord is precious or rare; and very probably

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^a Aben Ezra, Alshech, R. Simeon Bar Tzemach in loc.^b Bolduc. in loc.^c Vid. Schultens in loc. The Targum renders the word נֶתֶר “death.”^d Targum, Grotius, Mercerus, & alii.^e Munster, Clarius, Codurcus, Boducius, Junius & Tremellius, Caryll, and others.^f Rev. i. 20.

bably there were but few in those countries where Job and his friends lived, see *Eccles.* vii. 28. Now the business of such a one is to shew unto man, to any man, and particularly מְאָרֵךְ "the sick man," his uprightness, or rectitude, or righteousness; either the righteousness of God in this dispensation of his providence; to inform him, that as God is righteous in all his ways and works, so in this; that it is in very faithfulness he has afflicted him, and therefore should not think hardly of God, or that he is hardly used by him; should not murmur and repine, but patiently submit to the will of God: or else the righteousness of the God-man and mediator Jesus Christ; that everlasting righteousness he has wrought out, and which is revealed in the gospel, and is a principal article of it; and therefore a proper part of a minister's work to shew it unto men; hence they are said to turn many to righteousness, or to justify many^a; that is, by pointing out and directing them to the righteousness of Christ, as the alone justifying one; and which, as it is the solid foundation of peace, joy, and comfort in life and health, it is most proper to be observed to the sick man drawing nigh to the gates of death; which is a righteousness that will answer for him in a time to come. Moreover, it is the business of a minister at such a time to shew the sick man what is right for him to do: if the sick man is stupid and insensible of his state and condition by nature; then he is to inform him that God made man upright, but by sinning lost his uprightness; and this is not now to be found in men, but must be had in another: he is to labour to convince him of the sin of his nature, and the sinfulness of his life and actions; and to shew him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the just demerit of it, eternal death and damnation, and the absolute necessity of repentance for it. If the sick man is a sensible man, and is depressed under a sense of sin, and the guilt of it, and under fearful apprehensions of wrath and ruin; the minister is to set before him Christ, and him crucified; he is to tell him of his blood, righteousness and sacrifice, and the efficacy of them to take away sin; and to direct and encourage him to believe in Christ; assuring him, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved. Add to this, if the sick man is a good man, a truly gracious man, and yet has doubts and fears of his uprightness, and the truth of grace in him; then, the minister observing that this is the fruit of unbelief, and of Satan's temptations, is to do all he can to clear up this point to him, that he is truly a regenerated and converted man; that he has truth in the inner part, and that the work of grace is begun, which will be performed in him: and this, as one rightly observes, is the hardest work that the ministers of the gospel have, to make men understand and see their own uprightness: all this being done, then he is gracious; the minister is gracious, has pity and compassion on the sick man, and speaks of the grace of God to him, and makes a gracious supplication

for

^a מִצְרַיִם Dan. xii. 3.

Caryll in loc.

for him ; (so some¹ render the words) and prays in the following manner ; “ O Lord God, deliver this sick man from going down to the pit, redeem his life from destruction ; for I find in the everlasting gospel, there is a ransom or atonement for sin provided for such persons.”

But after all, I rather think, with others², that the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, is meant by the messenger or angel ; who is the angel that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, in whom the name of the Lord was, who could, though he would not, pardon their iniquities ; the angel of God’s presence, who always appears before him, and introduces men into his presence, and through whom they enjoy it ; and the angel or messenger of the covenant, who has confirmed it by his blood, and has revealed it more clearly in the gospel : who also is an interpreter of his Father’s mind and will, with which he is thoroughly acquainted, lying in his bosom ; or an orator, the essential Word of God that spake for his people in council and covenant ; their advocate with the Father, and the antitypical Aaron, that can speak well ; having as man and mediator the tongue of the learned given him to speak a word in season : and he is one among a thousand ; the chiefest among ten thousand, angels or men ; he has obtained a more excellent name, and is of a superior nature to angels, being their creator, Lord, and head ; and is higher than the kings of the earth ; there is none like unto him among all the creatures in heaven or earth ; and to a believer he is all in all. And his office as a prophet is to shew unto men the uprightness or righteousness of God ; the strictness of his justice, what that requires, even perfect conformity to his law, and which is sufficiently declared by his propitiatory sacrifice ; and also his own uprightness, or righteousness he has wrought out ; and which he, by his spirit, convinces men of their need of, and brings it near to them, and clothes them with it, as well as shews it unto God for them as their advocate ; and he also shews to them what is right and good for them to do, even to love mercy, do justice, and walk bumbly with God : and then upon all this God is gracious ; he manifests his grace and love, and orders deliverance from ruin and destruction, even upon the foot of a ransom found and given ; and seeing there is with him such a divine person in office in favour of the sick man : for the particle if¹ does not denote any thing doubtful and uncertain, but is expressive of something certain, and infers it from it. In the words may be observed,

I. The

¹ Junius & Codurcas. ² Cocceius, Schmid. Joh. Henr. Michael & Schultens in loc. Vid. Witii Oeconom. Fœderum, l. 2. c. 3. §. 3. p. 112. & l. 4. c. 3. § 30—37. p. 463—465.

¹ **NON**, non incertam nunc, sed contra certam & necessariam insert conditionem ; sine qua peccator iratum numen experiens, & jam morti primæ ac secundæ proximus, a pernicie liberari nequit ; ergo non doctor intenditur, non angelus, sed Goel. Schultens in loc.

- I. The great blessing of the text, *a ransom found.*
- II. The happy effect and consequence of it, *deliverance from going down to the pit.*
- III. The grace of God displayed herein, both in finding the ransom, and delivering from the pit upon it; *be it gracious, and saith.*

I. The great blessing of the text, *a ransom found.* Two things I shall consider under this head; *1st*, Who or what this ransom is; *2dly*, The act of finding it, and to whom it is to be ascribed.

1st, Who or what this ransom is. A ransom is a price paid for the redemption of captives, or some satisfaction given upon which they are released. In such a state and condition by nature are the elect of God, and ransomed of the Lord; they are the prey of Satan, and are led and detained captives by him at his will; they are brought into bondage by their sins and corruptions, and are held under the same; and they are shut up under the law, and liable to its condemnation and curse; now Christ is the ransom of them from all this. This will appear by a passage or two out of the New Testament, which will serve greatly to illustrate the text; for there is the same gospel in one Testament as in the other, only it is in the Old more covertly, and in the New more clear and express; and the one serves to open and explain the other. Our Lord, speaking of the Son of man, by whom he means himself, says, *he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*^m; not to be waited upon, as a nobleman, prince or potentate; but to be a servant to others, and particularly *so give his life a ransom for many*; so that it is the life of Christ that is the ransom-price of men. Again, the apostle Paul says of the man Christ Jesus, the mediator, that *he gave himself a ransom for all*; *ωλαυτηρον*, “a ransom-price” in the room and stead of all his people, Jews and Gentiles, *to be testified in due time*ⁿ; as it has been most clearly through the ministration of the gospel; whence it is manifest that not riches, nor righteousness, nor repentance, nor prayers, nor alms-deeds, are the ransom of men, but Christ himself. Not riches: The Israelites indeed, when they were numbered, gave every one an half shekel for the ransom of their souls, which was called *atonement-money*^o; but then this was not a real, but a typical ransom; typical of the ransom of Jesus Christ; which is expressly denied to be by *corruptible things, as silver and gold*, but by his *precious blood*^p. Had a man ever so great riches, the riches of the Indies, or of the whole world, he would not be able to redeem himself or his brother, or *give to God a ransom* for either; for if once wrath goes forth from the Lord, and he *takes away with the stroke of it*, a great ransom, even a king’s ransom cannot deliver from it;

for

^m Matt. xx. 28.

ⁿ 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^o Exod. xxx. 13—16.

^p 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

for will be esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength^a: nor is a man's own righteousness, or his good works, a ransom for him; these are what God has a prior right unto before the performance of them, and therefore men cannot expect a recompence for them, or a ransom by them; for *who hath first given to him (the Lord,) and it shall be recompensed to him again?*^b These are debts they owe to God, and when performed ever so well, they do but their duty; and therefore can never pay off the old scores of sin by them, or thereby make atonement for them; these are not profitable to God, whatever they may be to men, and cannot merit any thing at his hand; and besides are exceeding imperfect and unacceptable to God of themselves; they are thrown out of man's acceptance with God, justification before him, and eternal salvation; and if there is no acceptance, justification and salvation by them, as we are sure from the word of God there is not, then they cannot be the ransom-price for the souls of men, or atone for their sins: nor is the ransom, repentance, tears and humiliation; for what satisfaction do these give to an offended Being, to injured and inexorable justice, and to the righteous law of God? which those that sin against die without mercy, unless it is fulfilled, magnified, and made honourable: could men bring instead of *ten thousands of rivers of oil*, such a quantity of brinish tears, they would not wash away sin, or atone for it; still it would remain *marked* before God. Vain, stupid man! to imagine that his own tears will do what a Saviour's could not; for though *in the days of his flesh be offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears*^c; yet not these, but his *blood* was the ransom of souls. Nor are prayers and alms-deeds a ransom, though ever so well performed; these may come up before God for a memorial, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, but not for a ransom or atonement, when done in faith, and from a principle of love, and to the glory of God; but for many of the prayers of men, they do but receive the greater damnation, as the Pharisees of old did; and a man may bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and yet not have charity, or the true grace of love, and be lost and perish; and if he had that grace, and did what he did from such a principle, it would not atone for his sins, or be the ransom of his soul; no, this is in Christ, and him only. The word here used comes from a root which signifies to *cover*^d, and is much the same in sound as our English word, which seems to come from it: the mercy-seat is called by this name, and indeed it was no other than a *lid* or *covering* to the ark, in which the law was, and exactly of the same measure with it; and was typical of Christ, who by his blood and righteousness covers

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^a Psal. xlix. 6, 7. Job xxxvi. 18, 19.^b Rom. xi. 35.^c Heb. v. 7.^d Ex his de homine, & de Deo peccati condonationi quod suum est, conferente, exemplis eodem verbo utriusque actum experimentibus apparat, יְהִי optime reddi per tegere & tegendo illiniendogae inducere ac delere. Guffet. Comment. Ebr. p. 398.

all the sins of his people, their transgressions of the law of God; and by his sacrifice expiates them, or makes atonement for them, and so is the ransom of them. For the further illustration of this precious truth, I shall briefly shew you what that is which Christ has given as a ransom, which is sufficient; and for whom it is given.

1. What that is which Christ has given for the ransom of men: and from scripture it appears that it was his precious blood; for as redemption is always ascribed to the blood of Christ, as the procuring cause of it, that must be the redemption or ransom-price; and the apostle Peter is express for it; he says, *ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ*^u; a price sufficient to purchase the whole church of God, to expiate all their sins, and ransom their souls from ruin; and therefore may well be called *precious blood*; blood of great price and value: hence under the law so much regard was had to blood; it was to be covered with dust, and was not to be eaten, because it made atonement for the soul, though but in a typical way; for not the blood of bulls and goats, but the blood of Christ is our real atonement and ransom-price. Again, from a text before-mentioned it is clear, that it is the life of Christ that was given for a ransom; he came *to give his life a ransom for many*^v: life, than which nothing is more dear and valuable, and especially such a life as Christ's was; a life entirely at his own dispose, which another man's is not, and which he laid down, and took up again of himself; it was not forfeited by any act of his own, or forced from him by another; it was what he freely laid down, and voluntarily gave into the hands of men, justice and death, in the room and stead of his people; and as a ransom-price for them; his life for theirs: moreover, it is said to be himself that is this ransom; *who gave himself a ransom for all*^w; and so it is often expressed, that *he loved us and gave himself for us*, that he might redeem us; and *gave himself*, an offering and a sacrifice, and *offered himself* without spot unto God^x, even his soul and body, his whole human nature; and this as in union with his divine person; which union ceased not when he became the ransom-price. This is a full ransom or redemption from sin, from all sins original and actual, from all the demerit of them; and in consequence of this men are freed from the dominion and power of sin, under which they were held captives, and will be from the being of it; for Christ has by his atoning sacrifice finished and made an end of sin, and put it away for ever, and perfected them that are sanctified: it is a compleat ransom of them out of the hands of Satan: *the Lord hath ransomed Jacob*

out

^u 1 Peter i. 18, 19.^v Matt. xx. 28.^w 1 Tim. ii. 6.^x Titus ii. 14. Ephes. v. 2. Heb ix. 14.

*out of the band of him that was stronger than he^a ; by virtue of this ransom the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered ; and even captivity itself, or he that led others captive, is himself led captive by the Saviour and Redeemer of sinners. This is a plenary ransom from the law, its curse and condemnation ; Christ has redeemed his that were under it from it, being made a curse for them, and suffering its sentence of condemnation to be executed on himself ; and therefore there is none to them that are in him ; and they may boldly say, *who is he that condemneth ? it is Christ that died^b* ; and by dying he gave his life a ransom for them, and so secured them from the curse and condemnation of the law. In a word, it is a full ransom from hell, and wrath, and the second death, to which men are liable through sin ; Christ has even ransomed his people from the power of the grave, as a punishment for sin, and so as that they shall not be always detained in it ; as well as has redeemed them from the second death, by which they shall never be hurt, and which shall never have any power over them ; he has delivered them from wrath to come, and from going down to hell, or the pit of corruption. But I proceed to shew,*

2. For whom this ransom is given. It is said to be given *for many* ; even for as many as are ordained to eternal life ; for as many as the Father has given to Christ ; for those many for whom his blood has been shed for the remission of their sins ; for those many whom he justifies by his knowledge, or by faith in his righteousness ; for those many sons, he, the captain of their salvation, brings to glory ; and these are a great number, which no man can number ; and on account of which, as well as many other things, this ransom or redemption by Christ is called ^c a *plenteous one*, and lays a good foundation for hope in him : but then it is not for all men, or for every individual of mankind ; for though he is said to give himself a ransom *for all*, it is not expressed for all men, or for every man ; but the sense is, that he gave himself for all the *chosen*, or for men of all sorts, ranks and degrees, high and low, rich and poor ; and for all sorts of sinners, for Gentiles as well as Jews, as the context shows ^d : those that are ransomed and redeemed, are ransomed from among men, and *are redeemed unto God by the blood of Christ, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation* ; and cannot be all men, every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, or every individual of them ^e : the ransomed ones are represented as a *peculiar people*, and have such characters ascribed to them as do not agree to all men ; they are the church of God, the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, which are purchased by the blood of Christ ; and they are his sheep, he has laid down his life, and given it as a ransom for : moreover, *the ransomed of the Lord come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy, sooner or later* ; either

to the church below, or to heaven above; to neither of which do all mankind come^a. Add to all this, that if the ransom-price is paid for all, all would be ransomed, and so eternally saved, which is not true; or else the ransom-price is paid in vain, which surely will not be said; it reflecting so much dishonour on the justice of God, and the blood of Christ. The typical ransom-price under the law, the half-shekel, was paid for the ransom of the souls of Israelites only, and so is the real one; though not for all Israel in a literal sense, because *all were not Israel who were of Israel*, only a remnant according to the election of grace; it is the spiritual and mystical Israel of God whom he has chosen for his own peculiar people; the whole Israel of God, or all his elect, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, that Christ is become a ransom-price for; and who, in consequence of it, through his spirit and grace, are Israelites indeed, *in reborn there is no guile*. God so loved the world of the Gentiles, as to set and send forth his own Son to be the propitiation or expiatory sacrifice for their sins; and Christ is become the propitiation, not for the sins of the Jews only, or his elect among them; but for the sins of the whole world; or for the sins of all his people throughout the whole world, even for the sins of all the children of God that are scattered abroad^b. This ransom-price, as the typical one, is given for the ransom of the soul; it is that which has sinned, and is liable to death, the second death, or an eternal one; it is for that most excellent part of man, and therefore to be most regarded; and hence it requires so great a price: *the redemption of the soul is precious*^c; and nothing can ransom it but the blood of Christ; and therefore it is so great a blessing as it is to be ransomed, because it is no other than the redemption of the life or soul of man from destruction: and this ransom-price, like the typical one, is paid equally for all alike; every Israelite gave *an half shekel*, *the rich did not give more, nor the poor less*^d; the same price of Christ's blood is paid for one as for another; for though some sins be greater than others, and some are greater sinners than others are, and are redeemed from more sins than others be, yet there is but one price paid for all; for every sin being objectively infinite, requires an infinite price to be paid to make satisfaction and atonement for it, and which has been given; hence all obtain the same precious faith, are justified by the same righteousness, and share in the same common salvation. And, to add no more, this price is paid for them into the hands of God; for it is against him that sin is committed, and who only can pardon it, and does upon the foot of satisfaction made: he is the law-giver, whose law is broken by sin, and must be fulfilled; the judge of all the earth, whose justice must be satisfied, or he will not clear the guilty; and the creditor to whom men owe more than ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; and therefore the price, by

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^a Acts xx. 28. John x. 15. Isa. xxxv. 10. ^b John iii. 16. and xi. 51, 52. ^c John vi. 2.

^d Psalm xliz. 8. ^e Exod. xxx. 15.

or who will be a propitiation or ransom for him? for they could never have thought of the Son of God as a ransom; it could never have entered into their hearts to conceive it; for if *the world by wisdom knew not God*, it could never, with all its wisdom, find out a way of reconciling themselves unto God: and we see what fooleries the heathens have gone into, being left to the dim light of nature, and without a revelation, in order to make the Deity propitious to them: and even when this scheme of redemption and salvation by Christ is declared, it is treated by carnal men with contempt and ridicule; *we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness*¹; and therefore this can never be an invention of man's: no, it is the invention of God himself; *all things are of him*, and especially in a way of grace, and particularly our reconciliation, and the scheme of it. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*²; drawing the scheme of their reconciliation, ransom, and redemption; this flows from his divine counsels, *who does all things after the counsel of his will*; as there was a consultation held about the formation of man, no doubt there was one about his ransom and recovery; and which, with great propriety, may be called the *council of peace*, that was held between the eternal three on this special affair: this is the fruit and effect of his infinite wisdom, which shines in all his works, but abounds in the ransom and redemption of men, and the contrivance of it; this is *the manifold wisdom of God, the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the bidden wisdom, ordained before the world for our glory*; this is the result of an eternal purpose he purposed in Christ, of a resolution and determination he came into to have mercy on his people, and gave them by the Lord their God; whom he set forth in his decrees and purposes to be the propitiation for their sins, and fore-ordained before the foundation of the world to ransom them with his precious blood. This is owing to a covenant of grace, which he made with Christ, in which he called and appointed him *to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel*: and in consideration of his making his soul an offering for sin, and giving himself a ransom for his chosen, he promised him a numerous seed, length of days for ever and ever, and the utmost prosperity and glory as man and mediator; to all which he agreed, and said, *Lo I come to do thy will*³; which was no other than to give his life a ransom for many. And now it was with the utmost pleasure, and to his great satisfaction, that he found such a ransom; and which seems to be expressed in the language of the text, *I have found a ransom*; Christ, as such, was the object of his delight and joy when he was set up as mediator by him from everlasting. But this must be understood of God the Father, not to the exclusion of the Son⁴, since *the council of peace*

was

¹ 1 Cor. i. 23. ² 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. ³ Isai. xlix. 5, 6. and liii. 10—12. Psal. xl. 7.

⁴ Verum recte de utroque, patre & filio, id dicitur, tanquam veris auctoribus consilii de nostra redempione. Job. Hear. Michaelis note ubiores in loc.

was between them both¹; and Christ is, as the Septuagint version of *Isai. ix. 6.* calls him, *the Angel of the great council*; and he is the *Wisdom of God*, that dwells with *prudence, and finds out the knowledge of witty inventions*²; of which this of the ransom and redemption of men is not the least. And especially if the finding a ransom respects the impetration of redemption³; this peculiarly belongs to Christ; of him it is said, *having obtained*, or as it is in the original text, *having found eternal redemption for us*⁴; he is the ransomer, and the ransom-price; he is *the man the peace, and who has made peace by the blood of his cross*, and reconciled men to God by his sufferings and death, and is become the author of eternal salvation. But I go on to consider,

II. The happy effect and consequence of the ransom found, which is an order for deliverance from going down to the pit. And here I shall inquire what pit this is, a deliverance from going down to which is here ordered; and then by whom this order is given, and to whom directed.

1. By the *pit* is commonly understood the grave, and which in this book, and elsewhere, is so called; the word signifies *corruption*, and it has this name from hence, because in it the bodies of men putrify and corrupt: but the grave is what all men go down into; it is *the house appointed for all living*; it is man's long home, to which he is going, and where he must lodge till the resurrection: all men by divine appointment, die, and are brought to the grave, and there laid; good men as well as bad men, such as are ransomed by Christ, as well as others. It is true indeed that saints are delivered from it as a punishment; death is abolished, and the grave destroyed, as penal evils; but then they are not delivered from death itself, and from going down into the grave; they may have a reprieve for a time, and be spared a while longer; the sick man may recover strength before he goes hence and is no more; he may not be given over to death, though sorely chastened; this sickness he labours under may not be unto death; he may be restored and return, when he has been brought to the gates of it: but then such an ordinary event as the recovery of a sick man, seems to be too small a matter to be founded upon such an extraordinary and marvellous affair as the ransom of Christ, and does not answer the grand design of it; rather therefore by this *pit* is meant the bottomless pit, the pit of destruction, which the wicked go into, even *hell, eternal wrath and ruin*⁵; and which, though the elect of God are deserving of as others, yet, being ransomed by Christ, they are delivered from it. I proceed to inquire,

2. By

¹ Zech. vi. 13.

² Prov. viii. 12.

³ So Cocceius interprets it..

⁴ Eusebius, Heb. ix. 12.

⁵ Ne descendat in foream, infernalem ac eternam perniciem. Michael. not. in loc.

2. By whom, and to whom is this order given. Those who think the grave is intended by the pit, suppose these words, *deliver him from going down to it*, are addressed either to the disease itself the sick man is afflicted with; so Mr Brougham renders the words, "Spare him, O killing malady, from descending into "the pit;" diseases are the servants of God, they come when he bids them, and they depart when he orders them so to do: he sometimes says to them, as he did to the destroying angel, *It is enough*; the ends are answered for which the malady was sent, and it must be continued no longer; often so it is, that upon the sick man's prayers, or those of his friends, he is raised up from his sick-bed, and delivered from the grave: or else the address is to the minister, as others think^y, that attends the sick man, assists him, and prays for him; who is sent to tell him that he shall not die but live, as *Nathan* was sent to *David*, and *Isaiah* to *Hezekiah*, which is declaratively, though not authoritatively, delivering from the grave: but the words are rather an address of God the Father to his Son, the angel and interpreter with him, lying in his bosom; upon finding the ransom, upon the contrivance of the scheme of redemption, after the agreement and covenant made; sending him forth in the fulness of time, to give himself a ransom for his people, and redeem and save them from destruction, since such a way was found out and agreed upon; for the words may be rendered, "redeem him from going down to the pit," as the word signifies^z; and to whom can this be so properly said as to Christ the redeemer? or else this is the address of the Father to law and justice, upon the ransom being found, or the redemption obtained by Christ; since that is done, justice, let this man go free; law, *Let open thy prison doors, and no longer detain this captive; hell and death, give up your claim to him, seeing the ransom-price is paid for him.* Or these words may be considered as the words of the Son to the Father, the angel, the messenger and interpreter with God, the advocate with him; who appears in the presence of God for his people, and pleads his propitiatory sacrifice for them, urges on their behalf the atonement he has made, and the ransom he has given for them, and insists upon their deliverance from wrath and ruin; and declares it to his heavenly Father as his will, that they be saved from hell, and *be with him in heaven, where he is, and behold his glory*^x. I come now to the last general head,

III. To observe the grace of God displayed in all this; *then be is gracious, and faith*; not the minister that assists the sick person, and has pity on him, and *prays*

^y So the Dutch annotators, and Caryll in loc.

^z יְמִתָּה is the same with מִתְּאֵשׁ, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe. Utrumque confignat redemtionem, vel liberationem captivi, quæ sit soluto pretio, vel & substituta anima loco animæ, vita loco vitæ.

^x John xvii. 24.

prays for him; but either the angel, the messenger, the interpreter, one among a thousand, the Word that is with God, the advocate with the Father, who is gracious and merciful to his ransomed ones; and has in a very wonderful manner shewn his grace and love in becoming Surety for them; engaging to be their Saviour and Redeemer; promising to pay their debts for them, and to be their ransomer, and give himself a ransom-price for them: the grace of Christ is well-known, and clearly seen in his assumption of human nature, taking part of the same flesh and blood with his children, appearing in the form of a servant, who was Lord of all; and becoming poor, who was rich, even God over all, blessed for ever: and greater love than this could never be expressed by men, than to lay down his life for a friend; but such is the grace of Christ, that he has laid down his life for his enemies, and died for men while they were sinners, and had no love for him: and his grace is further displayed in his wonderful and prevalent intercession for them; for their conversion; for the application of pardoning grace to them; for the preservation of them from all evil; for their final perseverance; for their deliverance from hell and death; and for their eternal glorification. Or rather, the *He* here is God the Father^b, who is said to be *gracious*, and is so; he has proclaimed his name in Christ, a *God gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth; pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin*^c; he is the God of all grace, and has in various ways manifested his grace unto the sons of men, and especially in the affair of their ransom, redemption and salvation. His grace appears in finding Christ the ransom; for though this was the invention of wisdom, it was grace set wisdom at work to contrive the amazing scheme; it was because God loved his people with an everlasting love, and as an instance of that love, chose them to be holy and happy; and resolved upon their eternal salvation, that he cast about in his infinite mind to find out and pursue the best ways and means of effecting it; it was wondrous grace in him to send his Son to be the ransomer and ransom-price, when Wisdom could find none so fit and proper for this purpose as he; it was marvellous grace to agree to part with him, and in the fulness of time to send him to redeem lost sinners from sin, Satan, law, death and hell: herein he shewed forth his grace, yea the riches, the fulness of his grace, even the exceeding riches of it in this instance of kindness; sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sacrifice for sin, to make atonement for it, and be the ransom of his people: herein his love was manifested to the highest degree, and he gave the greatest commendation of it that could be; for a greater person could not be sent, or a greater gift bestowed: if it was an instance of the love of God to his people the Jews,

that

^b בָּיְתָן "the place," he who fills up all space and place, so Jarchi and Aben Ezra.

^c Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

that he gave Egypt for their ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for them, men for them, and people for their life^a; how much greater proof of his love has he given, by not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up for us all? Had he given all the angels in heaven, and all the rest of mankind on earth, a ransom for his chosen, it would not have been such an evidence of his love as the gift of his Son. And then, when Christ had given his life a ransom, it was grace to accept of this ransom-price in the room and stead of his people; for though it was a full and sufficient one, which law and justice could not object unto, and with which they must be both pleased and satisfied; yet God was not obliged to accept of it in the room and stead of sinful men, had he not voluntarily agreed in the covenant of grace to accept of it as a vicarious sacrifice and proper atonement for them; otherwise he might have insisted upon satisfaction from the sinner himself; but such was his grace, that he accepts the ransom of his Son in his room. Moreover, the grace of God is greatly displayed in what he has done upon the score of this ransom-price paid, and redemption obtained, in the justification of the persons, and in the pardon of the sins of those for whom it is given: justification proceeds upon, and is through the redemption which is in Christ; and this is an act of God's free grace; so says the apostle, *being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*^b; it is with a view to the righteousness of Christ, and to his life and blood being given as a ransom for his people, and to the redemption thereby procured, that God justifies any, and this is by his grace; and as if to say so was not enough to express the riches of it, it is said to be *freely by his grace*; not only the righteousness of God, his strict justice is declared, in this method of justifying sinners, whereby he appears to be just, strictly just, whilst he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; but the free grace of God is abundantly manifest in it, in accepting the righteousness of Christ, in the imputation of it to his people without works, and in the application of it by his Spirit: hence it is called the free gift, the gift of grace, and an abundance of grace^c: so likewise forgiveness of sin is a branch of redemption obtained by the ransom-price; hence, says the apostle, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*^d; though pardon of sin is through the blood of Christ shed for it, and with respect to that is an act of justice, yet notwithstanding it is according to grace, and the riches of it; though it is upon the foot of satisfaction and atonement, yet it was grace that provided Christ the lamb for the burnt-offering; it was grace that sent him to make reconciliation for sin, and to shed his blood for the remission of it; and it was grace that accepted the expiatory sacrifice, and declares the sinner forgiven on account of it; and which makes application of the blood of Christ

^a Isai. xliii. 3. 4.^b Rom. iii. 24.^c Rom. v. 15—17.^d Ephes. i. 7.

Christ to the sinner's conscience for that purpose; and who becomes very sensible of the freeness of the grace of God, and of the multitude of his tender mercies in the forgiveness of his sins. In short, the whole of salvation, which flows from the ransom given, and is no other than a deliverance from going down to the pit, or from hell, wrath, and ruin, is entirely of grace, and not of works. God, in saving men, does not proceed according to their works, but according to his own grace; it is not by works of righteousness which they have done, even the best, but by his abundant mercy and rich grace, that he saves them, through the blood and righteousness of his Son, and the regeneration of the blessed Spirit; and to this it will be ascribed by all the saints throughout an endless eternity, when the constant acclamation will be, *Grace, grace unto it.*

And thus have I endeavoured to open and improve this passage of scripture on this solemn occasion, as time would allow me. It may be expected I should now say something concerning our deceased friend and brother. I am very sensible that he himself was very averse to encomiums of the dead at such seasons, and for my own part I have no inclination to them; I shall therefore say nothing of him in his civil and moral character; how he behaved in his family as a parent and master, you that are of it know full well; and how he behaved as a neighbour, you that were his neighbours can bear witness; I shall only say a few things as to his spiritual and eternal concerns. It pleased God to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him, in his younger days; and as he knew it was his duty *with the mouth to make confession unto salvation*, as well as *with the heart to believe unto righteousness*, he very early gave up himself to this church of Christ, of which he was a member upwards of twenty-six years; and, allowing for the common infirmities of life, his conversation, so far as known by us, was agreeable to the profession he made. I doubt not but that he had that true faith which works by love to Christ and his people; a crucified Christ was precious to him; his blood, his righteousness, and all that belong to him; he loved him, his people, his gospel, and his ordinances; he was an humble christian, tender and compassionate to the poor, to whom he behaved very respectfully both by words and deeds; he had a very mean opinion of himself, being very sensible of the corruption of his nature, and the plague of his heart, and of his deficiencies and imperfections in life: to this was owing the great reluctance with which he accepted the office of a deacon, as many of you well know, and for the same reason chose to officiate in it only when pure necessity obliged him to it. In a visit to him in his late illness, which issued in death, he told me he had had some delightful views of eternal things, and his interest in them; and added, that he should be very ungrateful if he did not believe that Christ shed his blood for him: that passage of scripture being mentioned in conversa-

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tion, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help*^b; he observed, that these words had been of wonderful use to him at a certain time, and had yielded him abundance of spiritual consolation and strength; as indeed in a few words are expressed the destruction and salvation, the ruin and recovery of men. And though his disorder increasing rendered him afterwards very little convertible, yet by broken expressions, and various tokens and circumstances, he was judged to die comfortably; and no doubt but he is fallen asleep in Jesus, and will be one of those that he will bring with him. May you, his children that survive him, tread in his steps, and imitate him in every thing praise-worthy, civil, moral and religious; attend the means of grace, and may the Lord call you by it in his due time, that you may fear and serve your father's God, and fill up his place in the world and church. I shall close with a word or two by way of reflection on what has been said.

Since there is a ransom found and given, and God is gracious upon it, and has displayed his grace in such a wonderful manner, this may be an encouragement to sensible sinners, who are depressed with the guilt of sin, to hope in him; *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy*^c, and *with him is plenteous redemption*: this being the case, there is no room nor reason for despair: *behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*^d; look to a sin-bearing and sin-atonishing Saviour; his blood cleanses, and his righteousness justifies from all sin, and his sacrifice expiates all iniquity; and God for his sake forgives all trespasses. Hence true believers in Christ have great reason to rejoice and be glad, who know the ransom-price is given for them, and they are delivered upon it from deserved wrath and ruin: these ransomed ones may come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; and when faith is in exercise, and they have a comfortable view of their interest in the redeemer; may say as the apostle did, *we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement*^e: such have reason to adore and admire distinguishing grace, and to call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless the name of the Lord, for the forgiveness of their sins, the ransom of their souls, and the redemption of their lives from destruction; and the grace displayed in all this, should teach and influence them to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this evil world.

^b Hosea xiii. 9.

^c Psalm cxxx. 7.

^d John v. 29.

^e Rom. v. 11.

S E R M O N XXXII.

The Mutual Gain of Christ and Christians in their Life and Death.

Occasioned by the Death of the Reverend JOSEPH STENNETT, D. D.
Preached February 26, 1758.

PHILIPPIANS I. 21.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.

THIS epistle, of which the words of my text are a part, was written by the apostle *Paul*, when a prisoner at *Rome*, to the church of Christ at *Philippi*. *Philippi* was a chief city of a part of *Macedonia*; or rather, a city of the first part of *Macedonia*^a, and a colony of the Romans, at the time of the writing of this epistle. Hither the gospel was brought in a very wonderful and extraordinary manner. The apostle *Paul*, and those with him, intended to have gone elsewhere, but were over-ruled and directed by divine providence, to steer their course to this place; where their ministry was succeeded to the conversion of *Lydia* and her household, and of the jaylor and his; which two families, in all probability, laid the foundation of a gospel-church-state in this city; on account of which it became more famous, than for its being rebuilt by *Philip* king of *Macedon*, father of *Alexander* the Great, from whence it had its name of *Philippi*; or for the battle fought near it, between *Augustus Cesar* and *Mark Anthony* on one side, and *Brutus* and *Cassius* on the other, when the latter were beaten by the former; or for the fountains of water, or the veins and mines of gold, with which it abounded, which formerly gave it the names of *Crenides* and *Daibos*, and since *Chrysopolis*; by which name, or as vulgarly *Grixopolis*, it seems it is now called^b. The church here was a well regulated one; it was in good order, and had its proper officers, *bishops* and *deacons*; one to take care of

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^a So the words in Acts xvi. 12. may be rendered, as they are by Castalio, if instead of πρώτην την, we read πρώτης, and which version agrees with the history of the place: for according to Livy, l. 45. c. 29. *Macedonia*, when conquered by *Paulus Aemilius*, was divided into four parts, and the first part was between *Strymon* and *Nessus*; where Pomponius *Mela*, l. 2. c. 9. places *Philippi*: and *Jerom*, De loc. Hebr. fol. 96. G. expressly says, " *Philippi* is a city in the first part of *Macedonia*;" and it was not the chief city of that part, but *Amphipolis*, according to Livy in the place referred to; nor was it the first city the apostle and his friends came to, but *Neapolis*, as appears from ver. 11. though *Photius*, Ep. 247. says, " *Philippi* was the metropolis of the province of *Macedonia*;" as perhaps it might be in his time. See *Pierce's Synopf. Ep. Philip.* p. 2, 3.

^b Vid. *Zanchii Prolegomena in Epist. ad Philip.*

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its spiritual, and the other of its temporal affairs. The members of it are described as *saints in Christ Jesus*; they were in Christ, being chosen in him to be holy as well as happy; and who, being converted, had an open being in him; they were called with an holy calling, had principles of grace and holiness wrought in their hearts, and lived holy lives and conversations. The apostle had a very great regard for them; he remembered them in his prayers, in which he gave thanks to God for their constant fellowship in the gospel. He expresses his strong confidence of the work of grace being begun in them, and of the performance of it *until the day of Christ*; believing, in a judgment of charity, that they were partakers of the same grace with himself. He declares the most strong and affectionate love to them, for the truth of which he appeals to God; and as an evidence of it prays for them, that they might increase in love, in spiritual knowledge, judgment, and sense: that they might be able to discern things that differ, and approve the most excellent; and that they might be upright and inoffensive in their conversation, abounding in the fruits of righteousness through Christ, to the glory of God. And whereas he was now in prison, he gives them an account of his bonds, and the usefulness of them; as that they were the means of spreading the gospel in many places, and even in Cesar's court, and of emboldening the ministers of it to preach it without the fear of man; though this they did from different principles, and with different views; some of envy, strife, and contention, and insincerely, thinking to add to the apostle's afflictions; others of good-will and of love to him, to the truth, and to the souls of men; knowing that he was set for the defence of the gospel. However, whatever were their views, the apostle declares it was, and ever would be, matter of joy to him, that Christ was preached; yea, he was persuaded, that the ill designed to him by some, would be over-ruled for his good, through the prayers of the saints, and the supply of the Spirit; for he had a well-grounded hope, that Christ would be magnified in his body, living and dying; seeing he knew, that should he live longer, it would be for the glory of Christ, and the advancement of his interest in the world; and should he die quickly, his death would be gain, both to Christ and himself; since he should die for his sake, in the faith of him, and the profession of it, and should be for ever with him; *for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* These words may be considered,

I. As one proposition, and be read, *for Christ is gain to me in life and in death;* as they are in the margin of our Bible, and by some interpreters of great note*. According to this version of the words, Christ is the subject with

* Ego autem Christum in utroque membro orationis facio subiectum, ut tam in vita, quam in morte, hucum esse predictar, Calvin in loc. Sic Beza & Gomarus.

with respect to both parts, and the *attribute* is *gain*; and this he was to the apostle, both living and dying.

H. As two propositions, the subjects of which are *life* and *death*; and the respective predicates *Christ* and *gain*; and which partition of them is more agreeable to our version; I shall consider them in each view.

I. The words may be considered as expressive of the *gain* that Christ was, or would be to the apostle, both living and dying; and this is not to be limited and restrained to him as an apostle, who as such received his commission from Christ; had gifts and grace from him, qualifying him for that office; and by whom he was made successful in it, and profitable to the souls of men; and wherefore he gained much credit and reputation among the churches of Christ: but is to be understood of him as a believer in Christ, in common with others; and it is true even of the meanest saint, that Christ is his gain in life and in death. I use the words, *believer* and *saint*; for Christ is not *gain* to graceless persons, nor is he esteemed as such by them; they see no excellency in him, to distinguish him from another beloved; nor any comeliness in him, wherefore he should be desired by them; nor can they imagine that any profit or advantage will arise unto them by professing and serving him; or that any gain will accrue to them by attending his word, worship, and ordinances; but, on the contrary, that they would be losers in their character or substance; and therefore, like the Gergesenes, desire he would depart from them: especially it cannot be thought that Christ should be gainful to those that strip him of his proper deity; count his blood as common, or no other than that of a common man; despise and reject his righteousness, and deny his sacrifice, satisfaction and atonement; and are self-sufficient to be their own saviours: but he is gain to them that believe in him, and is so accounted by them; for to them he is *precious*: he is so to them who have a special and spiritual knowledge of him; who have an understanding given them, or the eyes of their understandings are opened and enlightened by the Spirit of God, to know him that is true; that he is the true God, truly and properly God, and in whom is eternal life; and that they are in him that is true^c; are interested in him, and share in all the blessings of grace by him; who have such knowledge of him, of the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace, as that it is the beginning, pledge, and earnest of eternal life; and which knowledge, and the object known, are preferred by them to every thing else, and all things are reckoned but loss in comparison thereof; and therefore are desirous of knowing more of him, of his person, office and grace; being willing to suffer the loss of all things; that they may win^d or gain him, and a greater degree of knowledge

^c 1 John v. 20.

^d Phil. iii. 8, 10.

knowledge of him. Christ is gain, and reckoned gain to such who see him, and believe in him; who see the worth and value of him; the fulness of grace in him; the suitableness of him to lost sinners; and who, as poor perishing creatures without him, go to him, and venture their souls on him, trusting in him, who lay hold upon him by faith as the Lord their righteousness, their only Redeemer and Saviour; who lean and rely upon him alone for salvation; commit their all into his hands, and expect all from him, grace here, and glory hereafter; and who not only have an interest in him, but are satisfied of it, that he is theirs; and they are his; their Lord and their God, who has loved them, and given himself for them; to such as these Christ must be gain, and he is so esteemed by them.

First, Christ is their gain in life: he is their ~~to war~~, every thing to them, “their all in all;” he is every thing to them they want, and all they need they find in him. He is their *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*^c; their *wisdom*, to guide and direct them; their *righteousness*, to justify them, and render them acceptable to God; their *sanctification*, to make them meet for eternal glory and happiness; and their *redemption*, to deliver and save them from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world. He is their *life*, to quicken them, and to enable them to perform all the acts of spiritual life, and to entitle them to an eternal one; he is their *light* to enlighten them, and in whose light they view with pleasure all divine objects; he is their *food* they live upon, and by which they are nourished to everlasting life; and he is their raiment with which they are clothed; he is the source and spring of all their solid joy, peace, and comfort; and through an interest in him they have a right to all things pertaining to life and godliness; all are theirs, Christ being theirs; and therefore they must be great gainers by him. And how great their gain is, will appear by the following particulars.

1. He himself, his person, being theirs, he must be gain, and gain enough unto them; there being none among the sons of God in heaven to be compared to him, nor any among the mighty men on earth to be desired besides him. He is *the chiefest among ten thousand*^d; among ten thousand angels, or among ten thousand saints; being “the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person;” he is the one and only Mediator between God and man, through whom they have access unto God, and in whom they have acceptance with him; he is their prophet, to teach and instruct them in all divine things; their priest, to make atonement for their sins, and intercession for their souls; their king, to rule and govern, protect and defend them: he stands in, and fills up all relations to them; is their indulgent father, loving husband, kind brother,

^c 1 Cor. i. 30.

^d Cant. v. 10.

brother, and faithful friend; in all these he is gain unto them. He is *the pearl of great price*, on whom no price can be set; he is *more precious than rubies*; and all the things that can be thought, spoken of, or desired, are not to be mentioned with him; the *merchandise* of him, the *wisdom* of God, is *better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold*^s.

2. Not only Christ himself, but all other things of any value and importance, are theirs: Christ is *the unspeakable gift of God unto them*; and he is not given alone; God *with him freely gives all things*^b appertaining to their spiritual and everlasting life; they are blessed with *all spiritual blessings*^c in him; as with peace, pardon, righteousness, adoption, and eternal life; with all the sure mercies of *David*, the blessings of an everlasting and well ordered covenant; with all the stores of grace, and rich provisions of good things laid up in it; all the *fulness of grace* it has pleased the Father should dwell in him, is for their use; and out of it do they receive continually *grace for grace*^d; or a large abundance of it, as they want it; and every need of theirs is supplied by their covenant-God and Father, *according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*^e.

3. All the promises of the covenant of grace, and which are transcribed into the everlasting gospel, are theirs: *godliness*, true, real, powerful godliness, and those who are possessed of it, have *promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*^m; both as to things temporal and spiritual, and with respect to grace and glory; and these are all *in Christ, yea, and amen*ⁿ; and those that believe in him, are *beirs of them*; have a right unto them, and claim upon them, and enjoy what is contained in them: and these are exceeding *great and precious*; they are *like apples of gold in pictures of silver*, and are *more to be desired than thousands of gold and silver*; and such that know the worth and value of them, will rejoice at them when they find them, and when they are applied unto them, as they that *find a great spoil*^o; being suitable to their case, free and gracious, absolute and unconditional; and what give them immediate comfort and relief, and are of service to them in future times of difficulty and distress.

4. Christ must needs be gain to those that know him, and believe in him, since high honours are conferred on them by him. Though they may, by embracing and professing him, lose their name, credit, and reputation among men, and be reckoned *the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things*^p; yet they are *made by Christ kings and priests unto God and his Father*^q; these two high and honourable characters are united in them; they are a *royal priesthood*^r. They are kings, not titular ones: they have now a kingdom of grace, which is within them,

^s Prov. iii. 14, 15. ^b Rom. viii. 32. ^t Ephes. i. 3. ^k Col. i. 19. John i. 16.

^l Phil. iv. 19. ^m 1 Tim. iv. 8. ⁿ 2 Cor. i. 20. ^o 2 Peter i. 4. Prov. xxv. 11.
Psalm cxix. 72, 162. ^p 1 Cor. iv. 13. ^q Rev. i. 5. ^r 1 Peter ii. 9.

them, where grace reigns through righteousness over sin, Satan, and the world; and which lies in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and they are heirs of an everlasting one: they have a crown of life, righteousness, and glory laid up for them, and a throne of glory prepared and set up for them; even the same on which their Lord and Head, their Redeemer and Saviour sits, and they will sit with him on it: they fare like kings; they sit at the king's table, and partake of royal dainties: they are clothed like such; being related to Christ the King of kings; they are his queen, and stand at his right hand in gold of Ophir; their clothing is wrought gold, and raiment of needle-work: and they have the attendance of kings; angels are their life-guards; those ministering spirits minister to them who are heirs of salvation. And they are priests; they have easy and ready access to God their Father, through Christ the Mediator, under the influence of one Spirit; and they have access with freedom and boldness; they can come to God through the blood of Christ with intrepidity, and with full assurance of faith; they can come without fear to God, and offer up their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and present themselves, souls and bodies, a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to him. *This honour have all the saints.*

5. They are possessed of abundance of riches from Christ; every thing in Christ is gain to them, even his very poverty; for *through his poverty they are made rich*; and how enriching then must his riches be! for all his riches are theirs; his riches, as the creator and governor of the world; *the earth is his, and the fulness thereof*, and all this belongs to his people; the world is theirs, he being theirs; they are heirs of it, as Abraham was; they have a rightful claim unto it, and possess as much of it as is for their good, and enjoy it in a manner others do not: the riches of grace, and the riches of glory, are theirs; the *unsearchable riches of Christ*, which can never be traced out, nor told over; the true, solid, and substantial riches, even *durable riches*, which will last for ever, and can never be lost; and though believers in Christ may for his sake suffer the spoiling of their goods, and lose their worldly substance, yet in the issue they are no losers; they gain by their losses; for what they leave and lose for Christ's sake, they receive an hundred-fold now in this world, and in the world to come eternal life.

6. They obtain with Christ, and receive from him a glorious justifying righteousness; though they part with their own, they get a better; they are indeed obliged, upon their becoming the disciples of Christ, to deny *righteous self*, as well as *sinful and civil self*, for his sake: being convinced by the Spirit of God of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, to justify them in his sight; they drop it, they disclaim and renounce it, in point of dependence; they desire to be found not in their own righteousness, by which they see they cannot be justified

^a Psalm cxlii. 9.

^b 2 Cor. viii. 9.

^c Psalm xxiv. 1.

^d Mark x. 30.

tified before God; they perceive it is a garment too narrow to wrap themselves in, and therefore lay it aside as their robe of righteousness; but what do they lose thereby? only rags, and these filthy ones; which are of no more use to cover naked souls, and shelter them from the wrath of God, and avenging justice, than the aprons of fig-leaves were to our first parents, when they had sinned: and in the room of it they gain a better righteousness; not only a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the hypocritical scribes and pharisees; but even that exceeds the real holiness of saints; that new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness; yea, that exceeds the righteousness of the angels in heaven, and of *Adam* in a state of innocence; for it is not the righteousness of a creature, but the *righteousness of God, which is unto and upon all them that believe*^x; it is a righteousness as broad as the commandment is; it is every way commensurate to the righteous law of God, by which that is magnified and made honourable; by which justice is satisfied, and with which God is well pleased; it is an everlasting one, and will answer for the saints in a time to come; it acquits them now, and will hereafter; it secures from all condemnation and wrath, and entitles to eternal life.

7. All that believe in Christ gain much by his blood and sacrifice: they have redemption through his blood, from all their iniquities; from the law, and all its curses; from Satan and his principalities and powers; from the world, and all their enemies; from hell, wrath, ruin, and destruction: and this they have, not through corruptible things, as silver and gold, but through the precious blood of Christ. By this likewise full remission of sins is obtained, peace is made with God, and reconciliation for sin; this being also sprinkled on the conscience, speaks peace there, and purges it from dead works, and cleanses from all sin: by the sacrifice of Christ, sin is finished and made an end of; it is put away for ever; and those that are sanctified, are perfected by it; which lays a foundation for solid joy, in all that have received the atonement; whose gain hereby is exceeding great.

8. All that believe in Christ are, and shall be saved, *with an everlasting salvation*. Christ, as their surety, engaged to be the Saviour of them; he came into this world in their nature for that purpose; and by his obedience, sufferings, and death, has obtained eternal salvation for them. This is in him, and in no other; nor is there any other person, or name, or thing under heaven, whereby any can be saved; he is in vain to expect it from *bills and mountains*; from any works of men, be they ever so numerous; but in Christ alone is the *salvation of Israel*^y: and they that believe in him, believe in him to the saving of the soul; and do at last receive the end of their faith, *even the salvation of their souls*; the redemption of which

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is precious, as being of more worth than a world, and requires a price a creature cannot give: so that as on the one hand, it will be no profit or advantage to a man, should he *gain the whole world, and lose his own soul*²; on the other hand, he, whose soul is saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, and by him, must be thereby an infinite gainer.

9. Once more let it be observed, that every thing that belongs to Christ, or has any connection with him, is gain to the believer in him. The ministers of Christ are theirs, whether *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*³, or whoever they be; they have a right to their ministrations, and they receive profit by them, for they speak unto them for exhortation, consolation, and edification; though they have not *dominion over their faith*, they are *helpers of their joy*⁴; they are instruments of encouraging their faith and hope in God, and of increasing their spiritual knowledge and joy in the Lord. The gospel of Christ, when mixed with faith by them that hear it, becomes profitable; when it is found and eat by faith, it is the rejoicing of the heart; it is soul-strengthening and comforting food to faith; and is esteemed by the believer more than the necessary food of his body. The ordinances of Christ are *breasts of consolation*⁵, and afford much spiritual refreshment, when the presence of Christ is enjoyed in them: and the people of Christ are very beneficial one to another, by praying together, and building up one another on their most holy faith; by sympathizing with each other, conversing together, and relating their experiences to one another; all which makes their company delightful and profitable: to say no more under this head.

10. The worst things of Christ, if any of his may be called bad, are gain to the saints, and are so esteemed by them; as *reproaches* for the sake of Christ and his gospel, and their profession of it; even these are reckoned by them *greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*⁶: there are no afflictions befall the people of God, but they are gainers by them; their consolation abounds by Christ, as the sufferings of Christ abound in them; all their trials and exercises serve but to brighten their graces, particularly their faith, and make it to appear *much more precious than gold that perisberb*⁷; their various afflictions work together for their good, either temporal or spiritual; and even work for them an *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*⁸: and if these are so gainful and profitable to them, what must Christ's best things be! earthly kingdoms, crowns, thrones and scepters, are toys and trifles, in comparison of them. Thus Christ is the believer's gain in life.

Secondly,

² Matt. xvi. 26.

³ Heb. xi. 26.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 22.

⁵ 1 Peter i. 7.

⁶ 2 Cor. i. 24.

⁷ Isai. lxvi. 11.

⁸ Rom. viii. 28. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Secondly, Christ is the gain of believer's in death, at it, and after it. When they die, they die in Christ : they have a secret being in Christ, as they are chosen in him before the foundation of the world ; and they have an open manifest being in him, when they are converted and made new creatures ; they live in him as the branches do in the vine ; and they continue in him, and through abiding in him, bring forth fruit as long as they live ; and when they die, they are found in Christ, interested in him ; and *blessed are the dead that die in Lord^s* ; they are happy with him, enjoying everlasting peace and rest ; falling asleep by death, they sleep in the arms of Jesus, and he will bring them with him at his second coming : the righteous, when they die, have hope in their death of enjoying eternal life and happiness ; and this hope is founded on the person, blood and righteousness of Christ : he is in them *the hope of glory^b* ; the anchor of hope being cast on him, on such good ground, on so sure a foundation, is in itself *sure and steadfast^c*, and enters within the veil where Jesus is ; it is a hope that makes not ashamed, or disappoints ; salvation follows upon it. These also die in the faith of Christ ; and as in life, the triumph of that grace arises from what Christ is to his people, and has done and suffered for them, from his death, resurrection ascension to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and intercession for them ; so when they come to die, what gives them reason to sing and say, *O death, where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy victory ?* is, that Christ has took away *the sting of death, sin*, and has fulfilled and satisfied *the law, the strength of sin^d* ; so that there is nothing lies against them to their condemnation. Moreover, their expectation in their dying moments is to be with Christ, and with whom they are desirous to be ; and chuse to be *absent from the body*, that they might be *present with the Lord^e* ; and they are immediately with him, as soon as soul and body are separated : and this is their comfort, both in life and at death, that they shall be for ever with him ; and when they are departed, their happiness at and after death lies in communion with Christ, in conformity to him, and in the everlasting vision of him. Communion with Christ is a most delightful and desirable thing ; the believer reckons it great gain to him, when he can say, *truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ^f* ; which yet is imperfect, and but for a season ; what gain will that be which will be for ever and uninterrupted, that is entered upon at death ! Now the saints are like to Christ, but it is but in part ; they are gradually *changed into his image from glory to glory^g* ; but at death, and as soon as in glory, this image will be perfect and complete ; and in the resurrection, it will be so both in soul and body. In the present state of things, we see but *in part*, and *through a glass darkly^h* ; but, in the other state,

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when

^a Rev. xiv. 13.^b Col. i. 27.^c Heb. vi. 19.^d 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.^e 2 Cor. v. 8.^f 1 John i. 7.^g 2 Cor. iii. 18.^h 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.

when death has done its office, we shall see Christ as he is, as well as be like him. A principal part of the saints happiness, will lie in beholding his glory, and gazing at it, and feeding the eyes of the mind upon it with unutterable pleasure; which to enjoy, is the ultimate end of our Lord's sufferings here, and of his preparations and intercession in heaven. But,

II. I shall now proceed to consider these words as consisting of two propositions: first, that *to live is Christ*, or life is Christ; it is to and for him: secondly, that *death is gain* both to him and to his saints.

First, That *to live is Christ*, or that the tendency of the apostle's life, which is the design of the expression, was to the service, honour, and glory of Christ; for not *Christ*, but *life*, or *to live*, is the subject of this proposition¹; *Christ* is the predicate. Wherefore,

1st, The sense is not, that life is owing to Christ, or that he is the cause and author of it; though this is true; for as he is the creator of men, *in him* was life, and that *life was the light of men*²; he it is that gives life and breath to all in a natural sense; as all have their being from him, they are preserved and upheld in it by him; they *live, move, and have their being* in him. Saints have their spiritual life from Christ; he quickens the dead in sin, even whom he pleases; he is *the resurrection and the life*³, or the author of the resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace; he speaks life into dead sinners, and implants in them a principle of it; and maintains it: he is also the procurer and giver of eternal life; he has given *his flesh*, his human nature, *for the life, the eternal life of the world*⁴, of his chosen ones; and he has power to give it to as many as the Father has given him; and to them he does give it, and they *shall never perish*: he is *the way, the truth, and the life*⁵; the true way to eternal life, yea he is eternal life itself; it will consist in the everlasting enjoyment of him; but this is not the meaning of the expression here. Nor,

2dly, Is it the sense of the phrase, that Christ is the object of spiritual life; though this also is true: a believer lives by faith on Christ; on his person for acceptance; on his blood for pardon; and on his righteousness for justification: he lives upon him as the bread of life, and lives by him; his spiritual life is supported and maintained through feeding on him by faith; and as it was the desire of our apostle, so it is of every believer, that *the life he lives in the flesh* should be *by the faith in the Son of God*⁶. But,

3dly, The meaning is, that Christ was the end of the apostle's life, the scope and aim of it; his main view, whilst he lived, was to serve and glorify him, and

¹ Το γενναν vivere, Christus. Articulus, nota subjecti, ut mox iterum. Quicquid vivo, (vita naturali) Christum vivo. Bengelius in loc. ² John i. 4. ³ John xi. 25.

⁴ John vi. 51. ⁵ John xvii. 2. and x. 28. and xiv. 6. ⁶ Gal. ii. 20.

and promote his honour and interest. This had been his constant care and study for some past; and it was his resolution still, should he be continued longer, to live to Christ; and it was his firm persuasion, that this would be the issue of his future toil and labour in his ministry, or of his sufferings; he was well assured Christ would be magnified hereby, as it was his hearty desire that he should: and it becomes every good man, whether a minister of the word, or a private christian, to seek the glory of Christ throughout the whole of his life, and make this the end of his living, that *whether we live, we live unto the Lord*^a; and the love of Christ, in assuming our nature, in suffering and dying in our room and stead, and thereby obtaining eternal redemption for us, should constrain and engage us *not to live unto ourselves, but unto him that died for us, and rose again*^b: particularly a minister of the gospel may be said to live to Christ, or to have his life devoted to his service and interest, when,

i. He preaches Christ, and him only, at least principally; when he is the subject-matter of his ministry; and when all things in it tend to this one point, and center in it, or have a connection with it; when the drift of all his discourses is to magnify Christ; to set off the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace: and this was the way of preaching the apostles of Christ, and first ministers of the word, universally gave into; *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*^c: and for this our apostle was remarkably eminent and famous; *I determined*, says he, *not to know*, that is, not to make known, any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified^d; and this resolution he pursued, and by this determination he abode, notwithstanding the clamours and cavils of the Jewish doctors against it, and the sneers of the wise philosophers of the age at it; *we preach*, says he, *Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness*^e: and this is done when he is declared to be God over all blessed for ever; and that all divine perfections are in him; that *the fulness of the God-head dwells in him*; that he is in *the form of God*, and *thought it no robbery to be equal with him*^f; having the same nature and attributes; the same glorious names and titles; the same works being done by him, and the same worship and homage given to him. When he is set forth in all his offices, as the surety that engaged to take upon him the nature of his people, to pay their debts, and satisfy for their sins, and save their souls; as the Saviour and Redeemer of them from all their sins, and the sad effects of them; as their only Mediator, who transacts all affairs for them, between God and them; as their prophet, to whose instructions, relating to doctrine and worship, they are to attend; as their priest, who has offered himself without spot to God for them, appears in the presence of God on their account, and ever lives to make intercession for them;

and

^a Rom. xiv. 8.

^b 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

^c 2 Cor. iv. 5.

^d 1 Cor. ii. 2.

^e 1 Cor. i. 23.

^f Rom. ix. 5. Colos. ii. 9. Phil. ii. 6.

and as their king, to whom they recommend subjection as such, and obedience to all his commands and ordinances. When also they preach up the benefits and blessings of grace which come by him ; as that the acceptance of men with God is not on the account of any works of righteousness done by them, but in Christ his beloved Son, and on account of what he has done and suffered for them ; and that justification is not by the works of the law, moral or ceremonial, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed, without works ; or by faith in that righteousness, without the works of the law ; that pardon of sin is not through the tears, repentance, and humiliations of men, but by the blood of Christ ; for *without shedding of blood, be there what will else, there is no remission*^c ; that adoption, which is from the good-will and pleasure of God, is founded on relation to the person of Christ, and comes through the redemption that is in him ; and that the power, privilege, and authority to claim that blessing, is a gift of his to those that believe in him ; and that *eternal life itself, is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*^d.

2. Then is the life of a minister devoted to the service and glory of Christ, when he studies carefully and constantly to preach the whole gospel of Christ, and nothing else ; as our apostle did, who *kept back nothing that was profitable to the souls of men, and shunned not to declare all the counsel of God*^e ; even that gospel which has Christ for its author as a divine person, and Christ for its subject as the God-man and Mediator, and which was preached by him in the days of his flesh, as it never was by any before or since ; and all the doctrines of it, relating to his person, offices, and grace ; such as the election of persons in him ; of redemption by him ; of justification by his imputed righteousness ; of pardon by his blood ; of atonement by his sacrifice ; of regeneration and sanctification by his Spirit and grace ; and of perseverance through him in faith and holiness. And then is the life of Christ's faithful ministers spent in his service, and makes for his glory ; when they constantly, openly, and without reserve, affirm these things, and continue in them ; when they make it the business of their lives to diffuse the favour of the knowledge of them wherever they come ; as this our apostle did, who from *Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum, fully preached the gospel of Christ*^f : and when they, according to the utmost of their abilities, both from the pulpit and the press, defend the important truths of it ; and contribute all they can to the spread of them far and near ; by their exhortations to fellow-ministers, by their influence and example, and every other way they are capable of. As well as when they are useful to the churches and congregations where they are placed, for their edification and comfort ; for the improvement of them in spiritual knowledge ; and for the furtherance of faith, and the joy of it ; as the apostle

^c Heb. ix. 22.^d Rom. vi. 23.^e Acts xx. 20, 27.^f Rom. xv. 19.

apostle here was persuaded would be his case with respect to the *Philippians*; see ver. 24—26.

3. Then is a minister's life directed to the honour and glory of Christ; when his conversation in the world, and in the church, is *as becomes the gospel of Christ*, he professes and preaches; when he walks uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, and the rule of the divine word; when he walks as he has Christ for his pattern and example; and so behaves as to be himself *an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*²; in short, when he discharges the duties of his office faithfully, both with respect to God and man; and when all the reproaches and persecutions of men do not deter him from it; when *none of these things move him, neither does he count his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he has received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God*³; nay, so far from it, that he rejoices that he is *counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ*⁴: and thus *on his part Christ is glorified*; though *on the part of others he is evil spoken of*⁵: so that upon the whole, such an active and suffering life is *Christ*; or what makes for his glory, and the promotion of his cause and interest in the world.

Secondly, The other proposition is, that *to die is gain*; but to whom? both to Christ, and to all good men, whether ministers or private christians, that believe in him: this is not expressed, but is to be understood.

1st, The death of good men, particularly ministers of the gospel, is gain to Christ: which sense of the words best agrees with the persuasion of the apostle, that Christ would be *magnified in his body, whether by life or by death*, ver. 20. seeing, should he live longer, his busy and laborious life would be for the glory of Christ; and should he die, even soon, that would also turn to the honour of him, and so be his gain; for which reason with others, *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*⁶; whether it is in the way of martyrdom, or in the common way. In the former way it was that the apostle's death was gain to Christ; for in this way he died, and thereby Christ was magnified; as he was by Peter, who died in like manner; as Christ suggested he should, when he signified to him *by what death he should glorify God*⁷: and O how is God glorified, and Christ magnified, by his suffering servants, and his honour and interest in the world promoted thereby! as it was in the primitive times, under the persecutions of the Roman emperors, when the apostles and many others, were called to seal the doctrines of Christ with their blood; which was a great confirmation of the truth of them, and of their unfeigned faith in them; and served greatly to establish the minds of weak believers, and animate others to suffer

² 1 Tim. iv. 12.

³ 1 Peter iv. 14.

⁴ Acts xx. 24.

⁵ Psal. cxvi. 15.

⁶ Acts v. 41.

⁷ John xxi. 19.

suffer in the same manner ; and was indeed an ordinance for the conversion of many ; who seeing their zeal for Christ ; their undauntedness and intrepidity ; their courage and resolution ; their constant profession of Christ unto death ; were won over to him, and so were *bis gain* : additions were made hereby to his churches ; his interest was increased ; his kingdom promoted and enlarged ; “ the blood of the martyrs being, as it was usually said, the seed of the church ;” and as it was then, so it has been in some ages since, particularly at the Reformation.

Moreover, the death of the saints in the common way of dying, especially of gospel-ministers, is *gain* to Christ, and brings him honour and glory ; when they continue in, and abide by his doctrines, even unto death ; when they declare in their dying moments, that what they have preached to others are their only support, and continue to recommend them to them ; when they speak of the sweetness they find in them, and the comfort they have from them ; relate the choice experiences of divine love and grace they are favoured with ; and express their strong and well-grounded hope of heaven and happiness, upon that foundation they have directed others to ; and rejoice in this hope of the glory of God : as all this tends to establish and confirm those that survive, so it makes greatly for the Redeemer’s glory, which is his gain.

2dly, The death of the saints, particularly of faithful ministers of the word, is gain to themselves : and so the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* versions, by way of explanation, add, *to me* ; rendering the words, *to die*, or *if I die, it is or will be gain to me*. What is death ! or what is there in death that can be gainful ! it is a departure out of this world, as may be learnt from the context ; a taking a long journey ; a going to a man’s long home, never to return here again, to his house, his family, and friends ; or to be in the same station and situation he now is. It is a dissolution of *the earthly house of this tabernacle* ; an unpinning it, and a taking it to pieces ; a disunion of the soul and body ; a parting those two near and intimate companions, that have dwelt long together ; *for the body without the spirit is dead*^a. Death changes a man’s countenance ; breaks the frame of nature ; deprives of all sense and motion ; and renders all the active members of the body useless ; and turns comeliness into corruption, and the whole mass and bulk into rotteness, dust, and worms ; and what gain can there be in all this ? yea, there is much a man loses by death, and yet it is said to be *bis gain*^b : he parts with his dearest relations and friends ; he leaves them behind ; he loses all relation to them, and connection with them ; he is no more the husband, father, brother, &c. he loses all knowledge of the affairs of this world ; he knows nothing

^a James ii. 26. ^b Το αποθανει, μεδο. Mori, lucrum. Quamvis moriens videar omnia rerum jacturam facere. Bengelius in loc.

nothing what is done below after death ; what befalls his family or his friends ; whether to their advantage or disadvantage ; as *Job* says, *bis sons come to honour, and be knoweth it not ; and they are brought low, but be perceiveth it not of them*^p : he loses all his grandeur, in which he lived among men ; all his titles of honour, and all his glory ; these *shall not descend after him*^q to the grave : he loses all his worldly estates, his substance, wealth, and riches ; he carries nothing away with him ; when *bis soul is required of him*, and the question is, *whose shall those things be* ? he has enjoyed ? the answer must be, whosoever they are, they are no more his ; he has lost his property in them, and his possession of them : yea, dying he has lost his life, his animal life, than which nothing is dearer to a man ; *skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will be give for his life*^r : now what is that at a good man's death, that can counter-balance all this loss, or rather over-balance it, to make it gain to him ? and that it is gain, notwithstanding all this loss, will appear by considering the following things :

1. What a good man, whether in a public or private capacity, is then rid of and freed from : he is at death freed from sin, and the riddance of that is gain unto him ; he is now freed from obligation to punishment for it by the death of Christ ; and he is clear of the guilt of it before God, and on his own conscience, by the blood of sprinkling ; and he is delivered from the dominion of it by the power and grace of God, but not from the being of it ; *he groans, being burdened with it* ; it causes a continual conflict and war in him ; and he is sometimes carried captive by it, which makes him cry out, *O wretched man that I am*^s : but when a saint dies, he is immediately among *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and is as they ; those sins and corruptions, which like the old Canaanites to *Israel*, were thorns in his side, and pricks in his eyes, are no more ; the Canaanite is no more in the land, nor any pricking brier, nor grieving thorn of this sort ; all are gone ; and therefore death must be gain unto him. Likewise he is freed from the temptations of Satan : now though he is redeemed from him by the death of Christ, and taken out of his hands by powerful and efficacious grace ; yet he is subject to his temptations, as the best of men are : he solicits them to evil ; suggests bad things to them ; throws in his fiery darts ; is always going about to seek an advantage against them, and accuse them before God ; and though he cannot devour, he studies to distress and terrify ; and sometimes he does it by injecting fears of death, which keep some in bondage all their days : but when once they are removed from hence, got over *Jordan's river*, are safe landed on the shores of eternity, and are in *Abraham's bosom*, and in the arms of Jesus, they are out of his reach ; he is fallen from heaven, and will never regain his place there any more ; there is no tempter in

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^p Job xiv. 21.^q Psalm xlix. 17.^r Luke xii. 20.^s Job ii. 5.^t Rom. vii. 24.

the heavenly paradise. This is another branch of the believer's gain at death. Likewise, then he will no more walk in darkness, or be liable to divine desertions, and the trouble that arises from thence; nor be attended with doubts and fears, as he often is now; lest God should not be his God, and Jesus his Redeemer; lest the good work of grace should not be begun in him, or he should fall short of heaven and eternal happiness: nor will he be any more afflicted with an evil heart of unbelief, or distressed with that sin which so easily besets him; all sorrow and sighing on every occasion shall flee away, and everlasting joy be upon him: he will be no more troubled with diseases and pains of body; with outward calamities and afflictions; with reproaches and persecutions; with toil and labour of any sort, but be in perfect ease and rest; so that it may be truly said, *happy are the dead which are already dead, more than the living that are yet alive*⁴. Yea, the body by dying will be a gainer; for at the resurrection-morn, though it has been vile, base, and contemptible, it will be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ; and though it is sown in the grave in weakness, in dishonour, in corruption, and a natural body; it will be raised in power, in glory, in incorruption, and a spiritual body; *this mortal will put on immortality*, and this corruption incorruption; so that the gain will be very great. This will be further manifest, if we consider,

2. What the believer, whether a minister of the word or a private christian, enjoys at death, and upon it: he is immediately in better company than what he leaves behind; he is at once with angels and glorified saints; and joins with them in their acts of devotion, service, and worship, in celebrating the perfections of God, and singing Hallelujahs to the Lamb: he enters directly into the presence of God; beholds the face of God, and the glory of Christ, and has fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit; and God, in all his persons, is all in all to him, and is his portion, inheritance, and *exceeding great reward*. He then is possessed of perfect knowledge, which before he had only in part; perfect knowledge of God; of Christ; of the covenant; of the mysteries of grace; of the wonders of providence; of things which his eye had never seen, nor his ear heard, nor had it entered into his heart to conceive of; and what he had seen but darkly, and known imperfectly, now he has full, clear, and distinct ideas of. Moreover, he is now arrived to complete holiness; before he was black in himself, and full of spots, but now *without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*; before he was only in part sanctified, now throughout, in every power and faculty of his soul; the work is now completely finished; and there are not the least remains of sin and corruption in him. He is now in fulness of joy, and partaking of pleasures that will never end; he had only some tastes before of joy unspeakable,

⁴ Eccles. iv. 2.

speakable, and full of glory, but now he drinks large draughts, even to satiety, of the river of divine pleasures; and where he bathes himself with unutterable delight, and with a satisfaction not to be expressed. In short, he is now received into everlasting habitations, into the mansions of bliss and glory in Christ's Father's house; and enters upon the *inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away*; and enjoys the *kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world*; has the crown of righteousness laid up for him, given him; and is set down with Christ upon his throne, possessed of honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life.

All this is true, and may be said of our deceased Friend and Brother, whose death has occasioned this discourse. His life, whilst it was continued, was *to Christ*; to the glory of his name, and the good of his interest; and, had it been continued longer, would doubtless have been for the service of the Redeemer's cause in general, and for the advantage of this church of Christ in particular; and for the benefit of the poor ministers of Christ, to many of whom he was greatly serviceable; and of the poor members of Christ in various places, who were assisted by him when in distressed circumstances, or injured and oppressed by their fellow-creatures; who will very sensibly feel the loss of him. But *to die is his gain*; who now enjoys all the above advantages of dying in the Lord; and in whose death Christ has been glorified, in supporting him in the views of it, and in carrying him so comfortably and cheerfully through the pains and agonies of it; so that Christ has been magnified in his body, both in life and in death: an account of whom I am now to give; a task, I fear, I am not equal to, so as to do justice to the memory of so great a man.

Dr JOSEPH STENNETT was the eldest son of that eminent and learned divine, Mr Joseph Stennett, whose character has been drawn by an able hand^{*}; and is otherwise so well known from his excellent writings, as will preserve his memory in high esteem to late posterity. His father also, Mr Edward Stennett, was a faithful and laborious minister of the Baptist denomination, at Wallingford in Berkshire; and suffered much for nonconformity in persecuting times.

The Doctor was born in London, Nov. 6, 1692; and received his instructions in grammar and classical learning, from two of the ablest grammarians this age has produced; Mr Ainsworth, author of the *Latin Dictionary*; and Dr Ward, Professor of Rhetoric in Gresham-College. The other parts of literature, which more immediately related to his sacred profession, he cultivated under the care and direction of his learned and pious father; whom I find, on his dying-bed, giving him advice with respect to the management of his studies, and the conduct

duct of his future life². His fine natural parts, acquired knowledge, and above all the grace of God, and the eminent gifts of it bestowed upon him, and fitting him for public service, all contributed to form his character ; in whom the gentleman, the scholar, the christian, and the divine, were so happily united..

When he was about fifteen years of age, he made a profession of religion; and submitted to the ordinance of baptism. And those who have either heard his pious discourses, and fervent prayers ; or read his excellent sermons, which are printed ; can have no doubt left upon their minds, of his having received the grace of God in truth ; which is so absolutely necessary to a minister of the gospel.

In the year 1714, Providence called him into *Wales*, where he first entered upon his public ministry, and spent about four years at *Abergavenny* in *Monmouthshire*; from whence, having declined the pressing invitations of two congregations in this city, he removed to *Exeter*, not long after the dispute arose in that country concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, and while it was hot there : letters having been sent hither for advice, in the year 1719, occasioned great disturbances and animosities among Protestant-dissenting ministers of all denominations in this city. In the mean time our young divine, as he then was, exerted himself with an uncommon and distinguished zeal at *Exeter* ; made a noble stand for the proper divinity of our Lord, and appeared with great lustre and brightness in the defence of it. Here he continued about sixteen years, faithfully discharging his ministerial trust, and adorning his office with a becoming life and conversation. In 1737, he was called to the pastoral care of this church, and was invested with that office September 15th the same year, being twenty years ago and upwards : so that he continued in the sacred work of the ministry about forty years.

In the year 1754 he received a diploma creating him Doctor in Divinity, from the University of *St Andrews* in *Scotland*, at the instance and recommendation of his Royal Highness their Chancellor ; who was pleased to send it to him in a very obliging manner by his Secretary.

The Doctor's ministerial abilities and qualifications are so well known, as to want no description or commendation of them. His mein and deportment in the pulpit were graceful ; his voice low, but soft and pleasant ; and his language accurate and correct. He had a large compass of thought, freedom of expression, and fervency of soul, as well in preaching as prayer ; and would often treat his subject in a very comprehensive view, to the great delight, as well as profit, of his hearers.

As to his religious principles, besides those concerning baptism and the sabbath, wherein he differed from many ; there were others of greater importance, the doctrines of our first reformers, which he imbibed in his younger years, and abode

² See the Account of his Life, prefixed to his works, p. 34.

abode by them throughout his ministrations to the end of his life. I meet with an instance of this in a letter sent by him to the members of this church, about two months before his decease, wherein are the following expressions : " It is my great comfort in the views of eternity, that I have been led in these changeable sad times, steadily and constantly to maintain those doctrines, which I find are able to support me at such a season as this. I call my dear charge at Exeter, where I spent the first part of my ministry (and the Lord knows in great weakness) to testify this concerning me. I always thought, the great design of the gospel was to lay the creature in the dust, and to exalt the great redeemer of the church. I always taught both them and you to love Jesus Christ; to live upon him; and to expect your justification from him alone, his blood, his righteousness imputed, and his intercession."

With regard to his political character, he was a warm assertor and defender of the liberties of mankind; most zealously attached to the interest of his Majesty King GEORGE, and his royal house; heartily loved his friends; and all whom his Majesty esteemed as such; and was greatly offended with those, who gave into an unreasonable opposition to his ministry. His talents for public service in civil affairs, were discerned by some persons of the first rank and eminency, who were pleased to honour him with their friendship and acquaintance. And the easy access which this gave him to those in power, rendered him capable of performing many good and kind offices to multitudes of persons; which he attended to with great chearfulness and assiduity, and frequently with happy success. So that his death is a public loss to mankind; particularly to the whole Dissenting-interest, and especially with respect to its civil and political affairs.

The disorder, which issued in his death, was a mortification in his foot, under which he laboured near six months. During which time, though it appeared very frightful and terrible to those about him; yet it was not at all startling and surprising to himself. When he was first made acquainted with it, and it was intimated to him, that he might be carried off by it in a few days; he received the summons with an amazing composure of mind. And through the whole of his affliction, he shewed such christian heroism, as astonished some who were strangers to the inward power of christianity, and obliged them to acknowledge its divine influence. His patience under those excruciating pains with which he was attended, was almost inimitable; not one murmuring or repining word being heard to drop from his lips amidst all of them. And when he had any intervals from pain, it is thought, he never so much enjoyed himself, his family, and his friends about him, in any period of his life, as he then did. This serenity and chearfulness continued with scarce any interruption. And though

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he had not those raptures, which some have experienced on their dying beds, and in their last moments; yet his faith continued unshaken, and his hope firm and steadfast to the end. Thus your dear and faithful pastor finished his course, and fell asleep in Jesus, on the 7th instant; leaving behind him a very disconsolate widow and mournful family, all deeply affected with their great and irreparable loss.

During his illness, though at such a distance, he was not unmindful of this church, his more peculiar charge and care; as appears by his letter to you, in which he says: "Sometimes, I think, I could rejoice to talk to you once more of the loving-kindness of the Lord, and what he has done for my soul; and to recommend that dear Jesus, with all the blessings of his salvation, to your precious souls, which I have often sincerely, though poorly, done in the course of my ministry." And now, in your present circumstances, permit me to remind you of your duty, how you should behave under them. And this I shall choose to do, not in my own words, but those of your late pastor, in his letter above-mentioned; which may, I would hope, make greater and more lasting impressions on you, than any thing I am capable of saying: "My dear brethren, says he, let your love abound one towards another; *forsaking one another, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* Exercise your charity to all men, in the manner in which the gospel recommends it.—Brethren, as you would have your souls prosper, labour to maintain holy discipline in the church; attend early and constantly on the public worship of God; and cultivate the duties of religion in your families and your closets. See that the generous spirit, that has long prevailed among you for the support and encouragement of the interest of our Lord Jesus Christ, may not decay; be exemplary in your conversation; and use your kind endeavours to restore such as are departed from the truth, or by an unholy walk have brought themselves under the censure of the church." My friends, frequently read over these instructions and exhortations; and though your pastor is now dead, you will perceive that he *yet speaks* to you, with the most tender regard, for your truest and best interest.

To you, the dear relations of the deceased, his mourning widow and sorrowing children, and other relations and friends, what shall I say? The stroke upon you is heavy; the providence is very afflicting. The loss of such an indulgent husband, tender father, kind brother, amiable relation, and loving friend, is a great one indeed! but *sorrow not* in an extravagant and unbecoming manner, as those *without hope* of a future state, and a glorious resurrection. Remember what is your loss is his gain; and that you will see your husband, your father,

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your brother, your relation and friend again, to greater advantage than ever you saw or enjoyed him here; for if we believe that *Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him*².

² *Thess. iv. 14.*

S E R M O N XXXIII.

The Superior Happiness of the Righteous Dead, to that of Living Saints.

Occasioned by the Death of the Reverend Mr JAMES FALL, of Watford,
in the County of Hertford. Preached March 25, 1763.

E C C L E S . IV. 2.

Wherefore I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive.

THE particle *wherefore* shews that these words have a connection with, and are an inference or conclusion from, those that go before, *so I returned, &c.* The meaning according to some^{*}, is, that the wise man, whose words these are, returned from his former thought and sentiment, expressed in the last verse of the preceding chapter, *that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works*; that is, as he explains it in the following chapter, that he should *eat and drink, and enjoy the good of his labour* with moderation and cheerfulness; but this he now revokes and called in, having observed the violence and oppressions that were in the world, so that a man could not enjoy the fruit of his labours with pleasure; but since Solomon afterwards repeats this sentiment again, it does not appear to be his sense; but rather it is, that he had returned to his former subject, the abuse of civil power and authority, observed in chap. iii. 16. *I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there;* and having made a short digression from thence, he here re-assumed his former argument, and enlarged and improved upon it, *and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun;* all that occurred unto him, all that were within the compass of his knowledge, or that

* *Aben Ezra in loc.*

that he had got any hint of by any kind of information, by tradition, or by reading the history and annals of former times, of his own or other nations; as of the oppressions of subjects by tyrannical princes; of the widow, fatherless and stranger by unjust judges; of the poor by the rich; and of servants by cruel masters; and perhaps he may have respect to the oppressions of the children of *Israel* in *Egypt*, and in the times of the judges; or he saw by the Holy Ghost, as a Jewish writer^b paraphrases it, and being now under divine inspiration, he might foresee by a spirit of prophecy, the oppressions that would be in after-times, of the Jews in the captivity of *Babylon*, and in the times of the *Maccabees*; and the persecutions of the churches of Christ in gospel-times, by *Rome*, pagan and papal; and all the injuries that have been or will be done to them by anti-christ, by the man of sin and son of perdition; *the man of the earth*, who ere long *will no more oppress*^c: it is truly observed by the wise man, that all those oppressions *were done under the sun*; for there are none done above it, none in heaven, none beyond the grave; *there the wicked cease from troubling*^d, and *there the weary be at rest*: the wise man goes on with his observations, and *beheld the tears of such as were oppressed*; which poured forth from their eyes, and ran down their cheeks in great plenty, because of their oppressions; which were all they could do, since they had no helper. The word is in the singular number, *the tear*^e, as if one continued stream flowed from their eyes like a torrent, or as if the source of nature was exhausted, and the fountain of tears dried up through excessive weeping, so that scarce another tear could drop, or that it was as much as could be, that another should fall: *and they had no comforter*; none to speak a comfortable word to them under their oppressions, to do any thing for them to alleviate their sorrow, or to help them out of their trouble: that is, they had no human comforter, that either could or durst relieve or release them; which is a very deplorable case, and was the case of the Messiah, as personated by *David*^f, and of the church, as described by *Jeremiah*^g: the people of God indeed, under the oppressions of sin, Satan and the world, have God to be their comforter; he is *the God of all comfort* to them, who comforts them in all their tribulation: one of the names of Christ is the *consolation of Israel*, whom good old *Simeon* was waiting for; the holy Spirit is another comforter, sent by the Father and Son; and it is the will of God that the ministers of the gospel should *speak comfortably* to the saints, by assuring them that their sins are pardoned, full satisfaction is made for them, and their warfare accomplished; otherwise they have no human comforters, at least at times; or they are such who are like *Job's comforters*, miserable ones: and it is further observed, that *on the side of the oppressors*

^b Jarchi in loc.^c Psalm x. 18.^d Job iii. 17.^e לַחְרֵם Lachryma, Montanus, Cocceius, Rambachius.^f Psalm lxix. 20.^g Lam. i. 9.

oppressors there was power; to crush them and keep them under, and hinder and deter others from helping and relieving them. Such wicked men *David* had observed in great power, and spreading themselves like a green bay tree^b; when on a sudden they came to nothing, having abused their power to the hurt of others, and in the issue to their own hurt: and it is here added, *but they had no comforter*; that is, not the oppressors, but the oppressed; which is repeated, to observe the aggravated affliction of the oppressed, and the cruelty of their oppressors; and not so much for the confirmation of the assertion, as to excite attention and to raise pity and commiseration in the breasts of others.

Now from all this the royal preacher deduces the inference or conclusion in the text, *wherefore I praised the dead, &c.* not that he composed panegyrics upon them, and raised encomiums upon their persons, characters, actions, virtues and merits; but he pronounced the dead happier than the living; he judged in his own mind, and concluded within himself, and declared it to others, as his real sentiment, that the state of the dead was preferable to the state of the living, and that the one was more eligible than the other; because the one was free from oppression, and the other under it: and this subject I have chosen to treat of, for the relief of your minds under this mournful providence which has brought us together, and which I shall attempt to do in the following method;

- I. Inquire who are meant by the *dead* and *living*, here opposed to each other, and of whom the wise man forms a comparative judgment.
- II. Observe the preferableness of the one to the other, that is, of the *dead* to the *living*.
- III. Shew more particularly in what the preferableness, or superiority of the one to the other lies.

I. I shall inquire who are meant by the *dead* and *living*: by the *dead* are meant not such who are so in a figurative and improper sense, but literally and properly; our Lord uses the word *dead* in both senses in one passage^c; to a certain person, who proposed to be a follower of him, but first desired leave to bury his father, he said, *follow me*, pursue the resolution made, and attend to the service included in it; *let the dead bury their dead*: that is, let the dead, in a figurative sense, the dead in sin, bury those that are corporally dead: and some are dead in a moral sense while they live corporally; he or she *that liveth in pleasures*, in sinful lusts and pleasures, whose whole life is a continued series of sin, are *dead while they live*^d; and this is the case of all unregenerate men, and of the Lord's people before conversion, even until they are quickened by the spirit and grace

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^a Psalm xxxvii. 35.^b Matt. viii. 22.^c 1 Tim. v. 6.

of God; *you shall be quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*¹; now though those who are dead in sin, many of them, be more happy than living saints as to outward things; *they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men*; — *their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish: these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, who increase in riches*²; yet the wise man would never commend such persons or pronounce them happy, and prefer them and their state to godly persons with all their troubles. Some are dead in a religious sense, while alive, are dead to a profession of religion they have made; they have had *a name to live*, professed themselves to be spiritually alive, made so fair a shew, and gave such proof and evidence of a spiritual life, that they were judged by others, even by churches, to be living christians, and became famous for the *life of godliness*, when they had only the *form*, and denied the *power* of it; now such as these after a time drop their profession of religion, depart from the faith, and become apostates, and so are *twice dead*, as the apostle *Jude* expresses it³; first dead in sin, as other unregenerate men be, and then dead to the profession they have made of religion: and now though these also, as to their outward circumstances, may be more happy than those who are truly alive in a spiritual sense; since, by their apostacy, they may escape the troubles and persecutions, they that live godly in Christ Jesus are liable to; yet *Salomon* would never give such apostates the preference to real saints.

There are some that are dead in a civil sense, with respect to calamities, distresses and afflictions which attend them in this life; and which may be called, and are called, *death*, and they represented as dead. The captivity of the Jews in *Babylon* is called a *death*⁴, in which God had no pleasure; rather, it was agreeable to him, that they should *turn* from their idolatries, and reform from their sins, and *live* comfortably in their own land again.. The sore and severe afflictions and persecutions endured by the apostles and followers of Christ, go by the name of *so great a death*; and the apostle *Paul*, is particularly said to be *in deaths oft*⁵; that is, he was frequently in danger of his life, and exposed to death, had the sentence of it in him, and despairs of life; but now such as these, are *the living* in our text; the unhappy persons, to whom the dead are opposed and preferred. It remains that by *the dead*, must be meant such that are so in a literal and corporeal sense, whose souls and bodies are really separated from each other; in which separation of soul and body death lies: *The body without the spirit is dead*⁶; and in this sense all men must die and do die; and such are intended here, such that have been dead some time past, are laid in their graves, of whom there is a certainty that they are dead; not merely given up.

¹ Ephes. ii. 1.

² Psalm lxxiii. 5; 7, 12.

³ Ver. 12.

⁴ Ezek. xxviii. 32..

⁵ 2 Cor. i. 9, 10. and xi. 23.

⁶ James ii. 26.

up for dead, as *Isaac* was by *Abraham*, from the time he was ordered to offer him; and who *from the dead received him in a figure*; nor supposed to be dead as the apostle *Paul*, when stoned at *Lysstra*, but rose up alive in the midst of the disciples; but who are truly, thoroughly and certainly dead, in a literal and proper sense; which seems to be the meaning of this unusual phrase, *already dead*.

But here we must distinguish between persons, and persons that are dead; the wicked dead cannot be meant; they die as other men, nor can *wickedness deliver those that are given unto it*¹: Notwithstanding their daring insolence and impiety, they are obliged to submit to death, to which they are appointed; such that say, *we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are at agreement*; and so promise themselves they shall escape the one and the other; their *covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with hell shall not stand*²; though they live ever so long, they die at last, and die unhappy creatures; *the sinner being an hundred years old*, that is, at his death, shall be *accursed*³; and therefore these cannot be the men commended for happiness in our text: the wicked when they die are cast into hell; *the rich man* in the parable, as soon as dead, *in hell lift up his eyes being in torments*, in everlasting burnings, the smoke of which torments ascend for ever and ever; *their worm dies not, their fire is not quenched*, their state is fixed and unalterable; there is an unpassable gulph between them and the righteous, among whom they never will have a place, and therefore cannot be the happy men here designed; but the righteous dead, whose death *Balaam* desired to die, well knowing that such are happy in death: These die as well as the wicked; there is, says *Solomon*⁴, *a just man that perishes in his righteousness*, not eternally, but corporally; *the righteous perishes*, that is, dies, *and no man layeth it to heart*⁵; or is concerned at it. Good men, even the best of men, die; those whose lives are most desirable, and are the most useful. *Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?* They do not, they die as other men; but are happier at death; *blessed are the dead*, not the dead in common; but that *die in the Lord*⁶.

By *the living that are yet alive*, we are to understand, such that are alive when others are dead, and who are attended with various afflictions, distresses and troubles; and particularly under the oppression of wicked men in power; of whom it is as much as can be said that they are alive, they are just alive, and that is all; which seems to be the meaning of this uncommon expression. And this is more especially true of living saints, who live spiritually, live godly in Christ Jesus, and suffer persecution in some shape or another for his name-sake: these may be said to *die daily*, and be in continual jeopardy of their lives; and were

¹ Eccles. viii. 8.² Isa. xxviii. 15, 18.³ Isa. lxv. 20.⁴ Eccles. vii. 15.⁵ Isa. lvii. 1.⁶ Rev. xiv. 13.

were it not for the good hope, through grace, they have of happiness in another world, would be of all men most miserable^y. See at large the description of them, in 2 Cor. iv. 8—12. and to these the righteous dead are preferred: which is the next thing to be considered; namely, to observe,

II. The preference of the dead to the living: *I praised the dead, &c.* The righteous dead, who, after death, are much more happy than living saints. These words indeed are generally understood, as spoken according to human sense and judgment, without any regard to the glory and happiness of the future state; as that the dead must be preferred to the living, when the rest and quiet of the one, and the miseries and troubles of the other, are observed; and which seems to be confirmed by the following verse; but I chuse to improve the words in the former sense. Death itself, and simply considered, is no happiness; and if it was, it could not be special and peculiar happiness to some, because it is common to all; high and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish, good and bad, all die; *the grave is the house appointed for all living*^z; besides, it is the fruit and effect of sin, *sin entered into the world, and death by sin*^a: Sin opened the door at which death came in; it was threatened in case of sin, and as a punishment for it, and is the wages and just demerit of it; and therefore can never be an happiness in itself; add to this, that it is a dissolution of a man, a dissolving the earthly house of his tabernacle, an unpinning and taking of it down, a breaking of the whole frame of nature, a disuniting the constituent parts of it, soul and body; and though it is not an annihilation of man, a bringing him to nothing, yet it is a reduction of him to his original dust: man was made of the dust of the earth, and at death he returns to it again, which is an humbling and a mortifying consideration to him; he cannot well brook it. Self-preservation is a principle implanted in all living creatures, and so in man; human nature is reluctant to death, and is not agreeable to it. Satan most truly said, *Skin for skin, yea, all that a man bath will be give for his life*^b: it is the last thing he chootes to part with; he is willing rather to part with any thing than that; *what man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good*^c? Every man desires life, and a long life, especially to live in health, prosperity, and success; even the human nature of Christ was reluctant to death; the thought of it was disagreeable, and he prayed for deliverance from it; *Father, save me from this hour*^d: indeed his death was an uncommon one, it was in the room and stead of others, of sinful men, and was attended with the wrath of God, and curses of the law for their sins he bore; so, that it is no wonder, that his human nature should shudder at it, when left to itself, and he should

say,

^y 1 Cor. xv. 19.

^x Job xxx. 23.

^a Rom. v. 12.

^b Job ii. 4.

^c Psalm xxxiv. 12.

^d John xii. 27.

*say, O ! my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me^e ; nevertheless it shews, that even sinless human nature is reluctant to death; and therefore death, simply considered, must be much more disagreeable to sinful, human nature. There must be something more than is in nature to make death agreeable, or desirable, or to cause a man to look at it with pleasure, and to carry him through it without fear; even that of being with Christ for evermore, which is better, and is judged to be better by a believer, than to be in this sinful world : death therefore, relatively considered, or as it refers to good men, is only an happiness ; death to them is no penal evil, death, as a punishment, being endured by Christ for them ; the curse is taken away from death, Christ being made a curse for them ; the sting of it, which is sin, is taken away by him, and death is become a blessing to the saints ; it is reckoned in the inventory of their good things, *death is yours^f* ; and they are pronounced blessed persons : *blessed are the dead that die in the Lord*, that die in union with him ; there is a secret union to him that took place in eternity, when the elect were *chosen in Christ*, even before the foundation of the world ; and there is an open union to Christ in conversion, which is the manifestation of the former ; the bond of which is the everlasting love of Christ, which can never be dissolved ; death cannot separate from his love, it dissolves the union between soul and body, but not the union between Christ and his people ; and hence they shall live with him soul and body to all eternity, and therefore must be happy ; as all are that die in the exercise of grace on him : the death of such is in a remarkable and distinguished manner a blessing ; *these all died in faith^g*, it is said of some ; so died David ; his last words, his dying words were, *be thou made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure* ; and this is all my salvation^h. And so died the apostle Paul ; *The time of my departure, says he, is at hand^k ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day*. This is dying comfortably and happily, to die in the faith of covenant-interest and of eternal glory : and so it is to die in hope of it ; the hope of the profane, of the hypocrite, and self-righteous man, is as the giving up of the ghost ; it is cut off like a spider's web ; and if it lives so long as they do, it dies with them, and is of no use at death unto them ; but *the righteous bathe hope in his death^l* ; whose hope is fixed on Christ and his righteousness, by which he is justified and denominated a righteous man : this is exercised by him in his dying moments, and is of use to him then ; and he rejoices in hope of the glory of God. They that die saints and righteous persons are the only happy at death, or to whom death is an happiness ; *precious in the sight of the Lord is the**

^e Matt. xxvi. 39.ⁱ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.^f 1 Cor. iii. 22.^k 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.^h Heb. xi. 13.^l Prov. xiv. 32.

~~III~~ 4. ESSAYS ON THE DEATH OF

the dead of the saints. What God the Father or he sent for man in creation, when Christ was born, or made arrangement for it in creation, and what the Holy Spirit has provided by his grace: and though there is something in death which is disagreeable, and makes the nearest relation of the deceased, who will have the greatest affection for them, willing to bury them out of their sight, as far as lies the distance between heaven and earth; yet there is that in the death of saints which is precious to the Lord, which he takes pleasure in. As a case may be, when a saint is walking in a beautiful well-known garden, he comes to, and finds a tomb before him; if the Lord causes one walks in the garden, the deceased, and gives his name, finds full hope for glory, and such objects cause them to rejoice. It is the desire of the righteous man that is in *Scriptura*: *Let me die the death of the righteous*: says *Paulinus*: it is always well with them in life, and so in eternity; it is well with them at death; they are never sorry, nor only from present evil, but from evil to come, and are intercessorily protected of everlasting good; for the righteous go into *life eternal*. The end of such a death is from that of others; and therefore the above wicked person said, *let my last end be like his*, the righteous man's; the end of such a man is *peace*; he goes out of the world with peace, serenity and tranquillity of mind, and enters into eternal peace; he receives the end of his faith, what his faith has been looking and waiting for, *the salvation of his soul*; he has his *freedom* now, and his *end, everlasting life* hereafter. But I proceed,

III. To shew more particularly, wherein lies the preferableness and superior happiness of the righteous dead to living saints.

First, It lies in what the righteous dead are delivered from; and this is what the wise man has chiefly respect unto; he had considered the oppressions, tears and uncomfortable condition of many in the present state of life, and observed the dead were free from all this, and therefore pronounced them the most happy persons. And,

1st, The righteous dead are entirely free from sin, the source of all trouble and distress in life; and when that is no more, there will be no more sorrow. What the apostle says of those, who in a spiritual sense are said to be dead to sin, is true of the righteous dead in a natural sense; he *that is dead is freed from sin*, even from the very being of it; they are not only delivered from the guilt, and any return of it, but from that itself: living saints are delivered from the guilt of sin through Christ bearing sin for them; and from sensible guilt in their consciences, through the application of the blood of Christ, which purges their consciences from dead works, the load and guilt of them, and their hearts from

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^m Psalm cxvi. 15.
ⁿ 1 Peter i. 9.

^a Numb. xxiiii. 10.
^r Rom. vi. 22.

^b Matt. xxv. 46.
^s Rom. vi. 7.

^p Psalm xxxvii. 37.

an evil conscience sprinkled with his blood, which speaks peace and pardon, and so better things than the blood of *Abel*; but then as fresh sins are committed, new guilt is contracted, which requires a repeated application of the blood of sprinkling; but this is not the case of the righteous dead, they sin no more, and have no more renewed guilt, and need no more renewed discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy. They are also not only free from the dominion of sin, but from any attempt made upon them to regain it; it is promised, and it is true of living saints, men regenerated by the spirit and grace of God, that *sin shall not have dominion over them*, and it has not; because they are not *under the law*, the law of sin and death, exercising its authority over them, but they are *under grace*; as a governing principle in them, which *reigns through righteousness unto eternal life*¹; yet notwithstanding, such at times is the power and prevalence of indwelling sin, that it brings them *into captivity to the law of sin*²: but it has no such power over the righteous dead, for it has not so much as a place in them; they are *the spirits of just men made perfect*, not only perfectly righteous through Christ's righteousness, but perfectly holy in themselves; they are without the spot or wrinkle of sin, or any thing like it; there is not a Canaanite in the land, not a single lust and corruption in their hearts: but not so is it with living saints; they are not free from sin in such sense; they are far from a sinless perfection in themselves; this has always been disclaimed by saints on earth in all ages, as by *Job*, *David*, *Solomon*, the apostle *Paul*, and others; and, says the beloved disciple, *if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*³: their complaints, confessions and prayers, abundantly confirm the same; *they groan being burdened with the weight of indwelling sin*, and will, as long as they are in *this tabernacle*⁴; the breakings forth of indwelling sin in them, their actual transgressions and iniquities, are *as an heavy burden, too heavy for them*⁵: but saints in heaven are rid of such incumbrances; those burdens are fallen off from them, and they will feel them no more; now sins of heart and life, are like the Canaanites to the Israelites, pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their fides, which give great pain and distress. Perhaps it was something of this kind the apostle *Paul* felt when he complains of *a thorn in the flesh*⁶: but in the heavenly state there will be *no prickling briar, nor grieving thorn to all the house of Israel*⁷, or family of God there: sin breaks the peace of the people of God now, so that they have *no rest in their bones* because of it; yea, their bones are broken by it, and the joys of salvation taken away through it; and though it cannot dissolve the union between God and them, it interrupts their sensible communion with him, and causes him to withdraw his gracious presence from them; *your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have bid his face from*

¹ Rom. vi. 14. and v. 21.² Psalm xxxviii. 2, 3.³ Rom. vii. 23.⁴ Cor. xii. 7.⁵ 1 John i. 8.⁶ Ezek. xxviii. 24,⁷ 2 Cor. v. 4.

from you, that be will not bear^b. Sin makes this world a weary land to saints, and all their solace and comfort is, that *Christ is as the shadow of a great rock to them in it*; and speaks a word in season to their weary souls, inviting and encouraging them to come to him for spiritual rest, where they find it: their inbred corruptions are to them like the daughters of *Heb* to *Isaac* and *Rebekah*, make them weary of their lives; but the righteous dead are no more harassed with them, but are entered where the weary are at rest, even into that rest, or sabbatism, which remains for the people of God. Sin now causes a war within them, where there are, as it were, a company of two armies, *the law in the members, and the law in the mind*, warring against each other; the flesh and spirit, sin and grace, lusting the one against the other, so that they cannot do the things they would; but with the righteous dead this warfare is accomplished, and they serve the Lord without any interruption, and do his will as it is done by the angels in heaven.

2dly, The righteous dead are delivered from the temptations of Satan: living saints, as well as they, are redeemed out of his hands by Christ, who has taken the prey from the mighty, and delivered the lawful captive, and has led captivity captive, Satan and his principalities and powers, who led his people captive at their will: and they are taken out of his hands at conversion; when the strong man armed is dispossessed of his palace by him that is stronger than he, his armour taken away, and his spoils divided; and they are turned from the power of Satan unto God, and translated into the kingdom of Christ; but then they are not freed from his temptations, even the greatest saint and strongest believer; the apostle *Peter*, was sifted by him as wheat is sifted, and the apostle *Paul* had a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him; yea, Christ, the Son of God, in our nature here on earth, *was tempted in all things, like unto his people, excepting sin*. Satan solicits good men to sin; he provoked *David* to number *Israel*, contrary to the mind and will of God; he finds something in them to work upon, the corruption of their nature, which he could not find in Christ; he knows what sin is most prevalent in them, and they are inclined unto, and he baits his hook, or frames his temptations agreeable thereunto; these are some of his crafty wiles, and cunning devices and stratagems, saints are not altogether ignorant of: he has great power and influence on the spirits of men; he not only works in the children of disobedience, and puts it into the heart of *Judas* to betray his Lord, and into the hearts of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* to lie against the holy Ghost, but he can suggest things blasphemous and atheistical into the minds of good men; as to call in question the being of a God, and the authority of the scriptures, the truth of christianity, and the like; which are some

^b *Isai. lix. 2.*

some of those fiery darts he casts at them, and into them, which give them great pain and uneasiness, and sorely grieve them : he disturbs them in religious exercises, not only in private, but in public ; he comes among the sons of God when they present themselves before the Lord to wait upon him, and worship him ; and he not only catches away the word preached from a careless and ignorant hearer, but diverts the minds of good men to other objects, from a close application to the word, and hinders their profit and edification ; and therefore they have need to pray that they enter not into temptation, as not to be able to watch in divine service with Christ one hour : he goes about to and fro in the earth, and observes the sins and failings of God's people, picks up all he can against them, and then accuses them before God ; as he did *Joshua* the high-priest, who had fallen into sin, though Satan met with a severe reprimand for it from Christ, the advocate and intercessor, and *Joshua* was acquitted and discharged : he often possesses the minds of saints with fears ; he sifts them, being suffered, as wheat is sifted, and throws the chaff of corruption uppermost, that they cannot discern the true seed of grace in them ; and so fear the work of God was never begun upon them, and that they are hypocrites, and have only the form of godliness, and not the power of it ; and that they shall one day perish through their own sins and Satan's temptations ; and many of them, by his suggestions, are through fear of death all their life-time subject to bondage. But this is not the case of the righteous dead ; they are free from all the temptations, solicitations and suggestions of this enemy of souls ; they are out of his reach, he is under their feet, and bruised there ; he is cast out of heaven, and will never be admitted there any more. There was a tempter and a subtil one in the garden of *Eden* ; but there is none in the garden of God, in the paradise above. Satan indeed, as soon as he fell, was cast out of heaven, and laid in chains, though suffered to walk about in them on our earth to tempt the children of men ; but ere long he will not only be bound by the mighty angel, and cast into the bottomless pit, and there be shut up for a thousand years, and then for a time let loose once more to deceive the nations ; but he will be laid hold upon again, and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, to be tormented for ever and ever ; he will never regain his place in heaven more : so that the saints will be clear of him, and every annoyance from him to all eternity.

3dly, The righteous dead are delivered from all darkness and desertions the living saints are liable to, and therefore are preferable to them. Now good men are not only, like *Heman* the Ezrahite, laid in darkness, and in the deeps of afflictive providences, but are often in darkness of soul ; walk in darkness, and see no light ; have no clear evidence of their interest in the love of God, and in the covenant of his grace, nor of their interest in Christ, his blood, righteousness,

2dly, The employment of the righteous after death is superior to that which living saints are engaged in, even to that which is most sacred and spiritual. Prayer is the work of saints on earth, and is both pleasant and profitable; but it supposes want, implies imperfection, and is attended sometimes with groanings which cannot be uttered: but prayer ceases in heaven; there is no need of it there: the preaching and hearing the word, administration of, and attendance on ordinances, are a principal part of the business of the people of God here; but in the future state there is no need of the sun and moon of gospel-ordinances, for the glory of the Lord lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The work of the saints in heaven is praise; their constant employment is singing the songs of electing, redeeming, sanctifying and persevering grace.

3dly, The joys of the righteous dead vastly exceed the joys of the living; saints now have joy in the holy Ghost, and peace in believing: they can at times rejoice in Christ, and in hope of the glory of God; but these joys are often interrupted by indwelling-sin, the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and the troubles of the world. But at death a saint enters into the joy of his Lord, and his joy is full, and always continues; everlasting joy is on his bead: and sorrow and sighing flee away; he is immediately in the presence of God, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore: so that upon the whole, the state of the dead in Christ is better than the state of living believers in this world; death is a gain to them; and better is the day of their death to them, than the day of their birth, since the one is the outlet of those troubles, which the other is an inlet into; and however desirable the lives of saints, and particularly of ministers of the gospel, may be to their fellow-christians, it is more to their advantage to be removed hence: you may think, that it was more needful for you, that your late pastor should abide in the flesh, for your furtherance and joy of faith; but it is better for him to be where he is; he has done all that work which it was the pleasure of God he should do among you, and it is your duty to submit to the will of God concerning him; of whom something may be expected to be said.

The Reverend Mr JAMES FALL was one of the fruits of my ministry, under which it pleased God to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him; he was baptized upon a profession of his faith, and received a member of the church under my care, in January 1730, upwards of thirty-three years ago. After some time it was thought he had a gift fitting him for the public ministry of the word; and it was accordingly tried, judged and approved of by the church, and he was regularly sent forth as a minister of the gospel; and in a little time after, this church being without a pastor, sent for him to minister to them, and approving

of his ministrations, gave him a call to take the pastoral care of them ; in which office he was ordained, *July 11th, 1735.* So that he hath been almost twenty-eight years pastor of this church ; what work God has done by him among you, in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of your souls, you are the best judges ; this however must be said of him, that he abode by the truths of the gospel he first received and preached ; and that his conversation, has been becoming his character, as a christian and a minister, being holy, harmless and inoffensive ; he had a good report both of them that are without, and of them that are within. The disorder¹ which issued in his death, was of such a nature as rendered speaking difficult to him, and in a good measure unintelligible ; but he was often heard to say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth* ; and declared he had no fear of death, and of what follows, but of the pangs of death ; and some of his last words were, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief* ; and at the same time, expressed his full satisfaction as to his eternal state. Thus died your pastor, and now sleeps in the arms of Jesus. And let me exhort you, this church of Christ, to keep together, and keep up the worship and service of God among you ; consult together and unite in your counsels for mutual good ; be frequent and fervent in prayer, that God would give you a pastor in due time, to feed you with knowledge and understanding ; let brotherly love be cultivated and continued with you ; live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. And as for you his dear offspring, for whom your parent had the most tender concern, for your temporal, spiritual and eternal welfare ; remember the counsel and advice he frequently gave you for your good, walk as you had him for an example ; tread in his steps, and serve your father's God, and it will be well with you. And what has been said upon the subject treated of, on this occasion, may serve to make death familiar to every believer here, and take off the dread and terror of it, which often possess the minds of real christians ; for if the dead are more happy than the living, why should we be afraid to die, since it will be greatly to our advantage, and give us a preference to those that survive us ? this may serve to cause us to breathe after that heavenly state, and choose rather to be *absent from the body, that we might be present with the Lord,* and even *to rejoice in hope of the glory of God* ; and it should be our great concern, that *whether we live any longer space of time in this world, we live unto the Lord, to his honour and glory ; or whether we die in a short time, having done our work, we die unto the Lord, to live with him to all eternity.*

¹ A Quincy..

S E R M O N XXXIV.

*The Saints Desire after Heaven and a future State of Happiness *.*

Occasioned by the Death of Mrs ELIZABETH GILL. Preached Oct. 21, 1764.

H E B R E W S X L . 16.

But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

THE apostle begins this chapter, with a definition of faith, which he describes, as *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen:* and illustrates this definition, by instances and examples, in the patriarchs, both before and after the flood; and he first instances in *Abel*, the immediate offspring of the first man, who by faith offered up a more excellent sacrifice, than his brother *Cain*: he then proceeds to *Enoch*, who by faith was translated, that he should not see death; and received a testimony from God, that he pleased him by his faith, he next goes on to *Noah*, the heir and preacher of the righteousness of faith: who being warned of God, of unseen things, by faith prepared an ark, for the saving of himself and family, from a flood threatened to drown the whole world. *Abraham* and his posterity are next taken notice of, on which instance, the apostle enlarges, and observes, that God called this good man from his native country, to go to another, he was afterwards to possess; and that he by faith obeyed and went forth, not knowing whither he went; and that he, with *Isaac* and *Jacob*, dwelt in tabernacles in it, and confessed themselves pilgrims and strangers; and though they had an opportunity of returning to the country from whence they came, were unmindful of it. *Abraham* never returned to it; and when he sent his servant to take from thence a wife for his son *Isaac*, he charged him not to lay himself under any obligation to bring his son thither, for both he and they had another and better country in view; *but now they desire a better country*, &c. which refers, not to the time of the apostle's writing; for then they were in heaven,

* This Sermon was preached by the Doctor, the first time of his appearing in public, after the decease of his beloved wife, Mrs ELIZABETH GILL, who departed this Life, October 10, 1764, in the 68th Year of her Age.

heaven, in this better country, but to the time when they dwelt in tabernacles in a strange land ; when they confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims there, and shewed no regard to the country they came out of, their hearts being intent upon another and better country.

All this may be applied to any and every believer, in any and every period of time ; they, as *Abraham*, are called from their native country, out of the world, and from the men of it, among whom they were born, and had their conversation in time past, and are bid to be separate from them, and have no fellowship with them ; are exhorted and encouraged to forsake their own people, and their father's house ; and under the influence of divine grace, do leave all, and follow Christ, as the apostles did. And as the patriarchs dwelt in tabernacles on earth, so they dwell in bodies, called *houses of clay*, which have their foundation in the dust ; *earthly houses of this tabernacle* ; which are easily unpinned, and soon taken down and dissolved. The apostle *Peter* makes use of this metaphor, with respect to his own body : *I think it meet, says he, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle;* 2 Peter i. 13, 14. and as the patriarchs confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, so do those who are effectually called by the grace of God. They own themselves to be strangers and sojourners here as all their fathers were ; that their state on earth is a state of pilgrimage, and their time in it, a time of sojourning, which they pass in fear : and hence the apostle *Peter* addresses such, and exhorts them, *as pilgrims and strangers, to abstain from fleshly lusts,* 1 Peter ii. 11. And these, though they have an opportunity of returning to their former state and manner of life ; nor are temptations to it wanting from their carnal and unbelieving hearts, like the Israelites, who in a fit of unbelief, were for making themselves a captain, and returning to *Egypt*, and their carnal appetites, hankering after the provisions there ; and from *Satan*, who endeavours to draw them back, by the snares and allurements of the world ; yet notwithstanding such are the impressions and influences of divine grace upon them, that they mind andavour spiritual and heavenly things, and are unmindful of their former country, and earthly things ; and such is the power of divine grace, by which they are kept, that they *are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul,* Heb. x. 39. but they desire, seek after, and look for, a better, even an heavenly country ; this world is not their home, their place of rest ; here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come, their citizenship is in heaven, and their hearts are there.

What I shall further do with these words, will be to observe the following things.

I. The

- I. The saints future state of happiness, as described by *a country, a better country, a heavenly one, and by a city prepared for them.*
- II. Their particular regard unto it, they desire it, seek after it, and look for it ; all which are expressed in the text and context.
- III. The notice God takes of such persons, and what is said of him with respect to them ; he is *not ashamed to be called their God* ; and that for this reason, because *he has prepared for them a city.*

I. The saints future happiness, is described by *a country, a better country, a heavenly one, and by a city prepared.* And on this I shall chiefly dwell, only say some few things to the other two observations.

1. The saints future happiness is described by *a country*, for so it is expressed without an epithet, in ver. 14. *they that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country.* And so it may be called, both with respect to a country in general, and to the country and land of *Canaan* in particular.

(1.) To a country in general, which is large, ample, and spacious. It is indeed sometimes only called *an house, which is eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. But then it is such an house, which consists of divers apartments, of *many mansions*, or dwelling-places, John xiv. 2. Enow, for the many that are ordained to eternal life ; for the many Christ came to give his life a ransom for ; for the many for the remission of whose sins his blood was shed ; for the many that are justified by his righteousness ; and for the many sons that are adopted into the family of God, and are brought to glory. It is also called *a city*, as in the text, and in ver. 10. which is an assemblage of houses, and which are fit for men of business, and of figure, and of fashion, and worth and dignity to dwell in ; and such the saints are. And at other times, it is called *a country*, as here and in ver. 14. And frequently *a kingdom*, as being large and capacious, sufficient to contain all the saints that have been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end of it. It is sometimes represented as *a far country* ; *a certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and return*, Luke xix. 12. the nobleman is Christ, the *far country* he went into, is heaven ; his going thither respects his ascension to heaven ; his end in going, was to receive his mediatorial kingdom, more visibly and gloriously ; for at his ascension he was made and declared Lord and Christ. And his return, designs his second coming, when he will call his servants to an account for the talents he has entrusted them with in his absence. Now heaven is called *a far country* ; not only with respect to wicked men, to whom indeed, it is, and ever will be a far country ; *the rich man lift up his eyes in hell, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*, Luke xvi. 23 but it is so, with respect to the saints, in their present state, which is a state of distance, and absence, and with respect to the views and prospects,

pects, which they have of this country here, and which are very distant ones : *tbin eyes shall see the king in his beauty ; they shall behold the land that is very far off*, Isai. xxxiii. 17. But they will not always be in a state of distance from it, they will be brought nearer it, and it is what they desire to be led into. *Thy spirit is good, says David* ; good in his nature, person and offices, and a good guide ; and therefore he adds, *lead me into the land of uprightness*, Psal. cxliii. 10. So called because none but upright persons dwell there, such who are upright in heart and life, and have the uprightness of Christ, even his righteousness imputed to them. *So in the new heavens and in the new earth, dwelleth righteousness, or righteous persons* ; and none but they ; as no defiled persons shall enter into the new Jerusalem : so neither shall the unrighteous inherit the kingdom of God, the ultimate glory : see 2 Peter iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 27. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

(2.) The future happiness of the saints, may be called *a country*, with respect to the land of Canaan, which was a type of it, that was *a land of promise*, as in ver. 9. being promised to *Abraham*, and to his seed. And so eternal life is the promise of God ; and it is spoken of as if it was the only promise, being the grand and principal one ; *this is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life*, 1 John ii. 25. see James i. 12. And a very antient promise it is ; it was very early on the heart of God to bestow it, and he made promise of it as early, *in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised, before the world began*, Titus i. 2. The land of Canaan, was a land of rest, it is sometimes called, *the Lord's rest*, because he gave it ; and sometimes the rest of the children of Israel, because they enjoyed it, Heb. iii. 11, 18. Deut. xii. 11. A rest from their travels in the wilderness, and from all their enemies about them, when entered into, and possessed by them ; and *there remains a rest for the people of God* ; a sabbatism, a spiritual rest here, and an eternal one hereafter ; a rest from all toil and labours, sin and sorrow, diseases, distresses, afflictions and troubles of whatsoever sort. The land of Canaan, is said to be a good land, abounding with good things ; *a land flowing with milk and honey*, a pleasant and desirable one, Exod. iii. 8. Deut. iii. 25. Psalm cvi. 4. Heaven is a country where great goodness is laid up, not to be expressed ; such good things that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of* ; where there is plenty and satiety, no hunger nor thirst, neither in a literal or spiritual sense ; where there are *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore*. The land of Canaan was ready prepared for the Israelites, was furnished with the accommodations and conveniences of life, without any pains, labour, or industry of theirs ; *cities they built not, houses they filled not, wells they dug not, and vineyards and olive trees they planted not*, Deut. vi. 10, 11. Heaven is replete with all good things, and ready prepared for the saints, without any toil and labour of theirs ; it is

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not obtained and possessed, by any *works of righteousness* done by them; not they that are of the *law* are heirs of this heavenly country: It is by *promise* and of grace; eternal life, is the free gift of God through Christ.

Once more, the land of Canaan, was divided by lot to the children of *Israel*, which was done by *Josua*, when subdued by him, according to the commandment of God; and so is the heavenly inheritance; *in whom*, that is, in Christ, says the apostle, *we have obtained an inheritance by lot*, as the word used signifies, *Ephes. i. 11*. Not that the heavenly inheritance is casual, uncertain and precarious, who shall enjoy it; for the elect of God, are most certainly predestinated to it, and shall possess it: nor that it is divided into certain parts and portions; for the whole inheritance lies among *the saints in light*, and is enjoyed by them all; but the sense is, that it is not at their option, or according to any merit of theirs, but according to the election of God, and his free, rich, sovereign grace in Christ.

2dly, The saints state of future happiness, is described, by *a better country*; better than *Mesopotamia*, or *Chaldea*, from whence *Abraham* came; better than the land of *Canaan*, promised to him and his seed; and better than any country on the globe of the earth, or than the whole world itself.

(1.) The goodness of a country lies much in its salubrious air, and temperate climate; in heaven, the *better country*, no noxious pestilentious vapours arise to infect the air; no hurtful lusts, that endanger and destroy the souls of men; no evil communications which corrupt good manners; no filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor any corrupt communications, proceed out of the mouths of the inhabitants of this better country; no filthy conversation of the wicked, to vex the souls of the righteous; every thing here breathes unspotted purity, and perfect holiness. No mists, nor fogs, nor clouds darkening the air, to interrupt the sight of pleasing objects, are here. Saints in their present state, it is sometimes with them a dark and cloudy day, the evidences of the truth of grace in them, and of their hope of eternal life and happiness, are much obscured; such mists arise, which intercept the sight of their beloved; he is withdrawn and is gone; they can neither see his face, nor hear his voice; clouds of sin interpose, and separate between God and them: with respect to sensible communion, they walk in darkness, and see no light: but so it is not in the *better country*; it is all pure æther, an unclouded sky, it is as the morning, when the sun riseth; *a morning without clouds*; as clear shining after rain; the sun goes no more down by day, nor does the moon withdraw itself; the Lord is their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning are ended; no more darkness, but one bright, clear, perfect and everlasting day: no storms, no blustering winds, no hurricanes are heard or known in this better country: In the present life, Saints are tossed with tempests, and not comforted. Christ is indeed

indeed *an biding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm* of divine wrath and vengeance; he is a rock, on which their souls are built; so that when rains descend, floods come, and winds blow, and beat upon them, they stand safe and secure, because built upon the rock of ages; but though they are safe, yet those beating waves, and bellowing winds, of sin's rage, and Satan's temptations, and the world's persecutions, with other afflictions, give them great disturbance and distress: but in the *better country* all is smooth, serene and calm; no excessive heat, or pinching cold, are here, as in some climates, where the air is extremely hot, or severely cold; but here no pain is felt from the influence of a fiery law, working wrath, nor from the fiery darts of Satan, nor from the flaming sword of justice. The sun of persecution looks not on the saints here, they serve the Lord day and night without molestation, and neither sun nor heat smite them; but they are led continually by the pure cooling springs of grace, and purling streams of love, and *all tears are wiped from their eyes*. Here no damps arise, from the prevalence of sin, nor from the cares of life, nor from too great a regard to earthly and worldly things, to chill their affections and devotions; no such thing is known here as coldness, lukewarmness and indifference in religious worship. Love, that abiding and permanent grace, glows with a divine warmth in every breast, and is at its height, in its vigour and full perfection.

(2.) The goodness of a country lies, as in the salubrity of its air, so in the fruitfulness of its soil: the *better country* is all a garden, a perfect paradise, it is called so 2 Cor. xii. 4. and vastly exceeds the earthly paradise, or *Eden's garden*, that was undoubtedly a most fertile and delightful spot, set all around with fruit-trees, and odoriferous plants; there were no thorns nor briars in it; these are the fruit of sin, and the effect of the curse pronounced on the earth for *Adam's transgression*; *cursed is the ground for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee*, Gen. iii. 17, 18. Nor are there any thorns and briars, in a figurative sense, in the heavenly paradise, in the better country; there is *no prickling briar, nor grieving thorn* to the saints, in all that land of glory, Ezek. xxviii. 24; whether by these are meant, profane sinners, children of *Belial*, who are like thorns and briars, useless and unprofitable, noxious and hurtful, and only fit fuel for everlasting burnings: or carnal professors, hypocrites in *Zion*; neither the one nor the other of these *shall stand in judgment*, nor have a place in the *congregation of the righteous*, to give them any annoyance; or whether internal corruptions, which are like the Canaanites, left in the land to be pricks in the eyes and thorns in the sides of the Israelites, these are not in that land; or the temptations of Satan, since *the thorn in the flesh, and a messenger of Satan*, are put together. Neither he, nor these, have any place in the heavenly country;

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that, as before observed, is all a paradise, where nothing grows that is hurtful and pernicious ; if the church below is *an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, campbire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense ; myrrb and aloes, with all the chief spices,* Cant. iv. 13, 14. with what fruit-bearing trees, and aromatic plants, must the heavenly paradise be filled, *in the midst of which, we are assured, stands the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding its fruit every monib ? Rev. ii. 7. and chap. xxii. 2.*

(3.) The goodness of a country lies in its riches, and, generally speaking, when a country is fruitful, it is rich ; the fruitfulness of its soil makes the inhabitants of it rich ; as we read of riches of Grace, so of riches of Glory ; which far surpasses all earthly riches ; the riches of this world are uncertain riches, here to-day, and gone to-morrow, they make themselves wings and flee away ; but the riches of the *better country* are certain and sure, solid and substantial, lasting and durable ; a treasure which moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal away ; they are unsearchable riches, it cannot be said how much and how great they are ; however, saints know in themselves that they have in heaven *a better, and a more enduring substance* than what can be enjoyed on earth, Heb. x. 34.

(4.) What gives the heavenly country the preference to all others is, the peaceableness of it ; God makes peace in his bigb places, in the highest heavens, where his saints and angels dwell, John xxv. 2. which may, with great propriety, be called *the land of peace*, as the phrase is in Jer. xii. 5. In this world there is seldom peace long, war is commonly in one part of it or another ; and as soon as peace is made, we quickly hear of rumours of war again ; and with respect to the state of men on earth, in a moral and spiritual sense, this life is a warfare : *Is there not a warfare to man on earth ?* as the words may be rendered in Job vii. 1. There is, and especially to the saints, and people of God ; they have many enemies to war with, the world, the flesh and the devil : *without are fightings and witbin are fears,* 2 Cor. vii. 5. yea, they have fightings both within and without ; without, with the world and the devil ; and within with the corruptions of their nature, their worst enemies ; there is nothing to be seen in the Shulamite, the most perfect, and the most peaceable believer, as the word may signify, but *as it were the company of two armies, set in battle array, and combating each other,* Cant. vi. 13. even *the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh* ; the law in the members, warring against the law in the mind ; but when this life is ended, the warfare is accomplished ; no more war, all peace ; the end of the perfect and upright man is peace ; he enters in, to peace, eternal peace, which will never be interrupted.

(5.) Another

(5.) Another superior excellency of this heavenly country, and which makes it better than any other, is the safety of it ; there is *nothing burns nor destroys in all this holy mountain*, this holy land ; there is no danger from any quarter, not from thieves and robbers, nor from beasts of prey ; there is no insidious serpent, nor roaring lion here ; there was a serpent in *Eden's garden*, and a subtil one, which seduced our first parents to their ruin ; and by whom the saints in this life are in danger of being beguiled, when permitted ; and by whom the nations of the world are deceived ; but he has no place in the *better country* ; the *Old Serpent the devil* is cast out of heaven, and fell like lightening from thence ; and his place will be found no more there ; on the earth he *goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* ; he is permitted to take his walks to and fro, in the world below, but he is not admitted to take any in that above ; *no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon* ; *it shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there*, Isai. xxxv. 9. that is, shall walk in the greatest safety, having nothing to fear from any quarter whatever.

(6.) What infinitely adds to the preference of this country to all others is, the better company in it ; here are not only *the spirits of just men made perfect*, who converse with each other in the most heavenly and spiritual manner, and join in songs of praise, and hallelujahs to the Lamb, and *an innumerable company of angels*, those shining forms, attending and waiting on them, and joining with them, in social acts of worship ; but what is ten thousand times more than all the rest, there is had an uninterrupted communion with God, Father, Son and Spirit ; here God is *all and in all* ; here saints behold God in Christ as he is ; behold his glory, appear in glory with him, see him as he is, become like him, and are for ever with him.

3. The saints future state of happiness, is described by its being *a country*, which is explained *an heavenly one*, a country which lies in heaven ; as we say of such a country, it is in *Europe* ; of another, that it is in *Asia* ; and of a third, that it is in *Africa* ; and so of a fourth, that it is in *America* ; but of this country, it must be said, that it is *in heaven* ; when it is spoken of as *an house*, it is *an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 11. when as *a city*, a city in heaven ; *our citizenship is in heaven*, Phil. iii. 20. and so of course the city we are citizens of must be there ; when said to be *an inheritance*, it is *an inheritance reserved in heaven*, 1 Peter i. 4. when it goes by the name of *a country*, or *a kingdom*, it is called *the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. v. 20. and indeed this country is no other than heaven itself, and in which all desirable persons and things are ; here is our covenant-God and Father, whom we are directed to address, saying, *Our father which art in heaven* ; and of whom it may be truly said, with the Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none on earth that I desire*.

3. The saints look for this better country and heavenly city, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did, ver. 10. they looked for it by faith. Faith is often expressed by looking, not only when it has Christ for its object, but also eternal happiness, then it is called, looking for a city which hath foundations, looking for the blessed hope, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life. Saints not only believe there is such a state of happiness, but that it is for them; and therefore they expect it, and wait for it: we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, Gal. v. 5.

III. The notice God takes of such persons; that desire, seek, and look for a future state of happiness, *He is not ashamed to be called their God*: For God to be called the God of his people, is the great blessing of the covenant; which runs thus, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, Jer. xxxii. 38. and happy are the people that are in such a relation to God, their happiness is not to be expressed; other persons may be happy in a temporal sense, who enjoy much of the things of this world, but thrice happy, infinitely so, are they whose God is the Lord. I shall not enter into the consideration of this wonderful blessing of grace, this would open a large field of discourse. I shall only take notice of the phrase used of God, that he is not ashamed to be called the God of his people; it is a very remarkable and unusual one; it stands between two clauses in the text, and has an aspect upon, and is in connection with them both, with the words that go before, *but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God, &c.* because the patriarchs spoken of were so very desirous of, so earnestly seeking after, and so wishfully looking for a state of happiness in another world; therefore God was not ashamed to own them, even in so near a relation to him as they to be his people, and he to be their God: had they been the grovelings of this world, had they minded only earth, and earthly things, and sought for and desired nothing else but the land of Canaan, and the temporal blessings of it; God, speaking after the manner of men, would have been ashamed to be called the God of such persons; he would not have owned, but have disclaimed the relation; but now, since their heaven-born souls were breathing after a future state of immortality and bliss, and aspiring to the heavenly regions, where they hoped to enjoy God to all eternity; therefore he was not ashamed to be called their God; but calls himself so, as to Moses, at the bush; *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, Exod. iii. 6. A like phrase is used of Christ in this epistle, chap. ii. 11. *for both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one*: of one nature, in one covenant, partakers of the same grace, though not to the same degree; and particularly, the one being the sanctifier, and the other the sanctified, and though both, holy: *For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren*,

tren, as it is intimated he would be, had they not been one with him, and sanctified by him. In like manner, though God is the high and lofty One, whose throne is in the heaven, and the earth his footstool, yet he despairs not to look unto, and to dwell with, *the holy, humble, and contrite soul*, Isai. lvii. 15. and chap. lxvi. 1, 2. moreover these words stand in connection with the following; *for he bath prepared for them a city*; which is a reason proving, that he is not ashamed to be called their God; and it is suggested, had he not done this, humanly speaking, he should have been ashamed of being called, and accounted their God; as particularly, the God of *Abraham*. This good man God called out of his native country, and his father's house, to go and dwell in a strange land, and as a pilgrim and a traveller in it: it is true, indeed, he promised to give it to him, and his posterity, for an inheritance; but to him, personally, he did not give so much as a foot of ground in it, as *Stephen* says, *Acts* vii. 5. Now if God had made no better provision for *Abraham* than this, he would have been ashamed to have been called his God; but he prepared *a city*, and provided *a better country* than *Canaan* for him: and this *Abraham* knew, believed, looked for, and expected, and died in the faith of; and therefore God was not ashamed to be called his God; and how many poor saints are there, whom God has called effectually by his grace from among the men of the world, who have scarce clothes to cover their naked bodies, scanty provisions of food, and that mean and coarse, to satisfy their craving appetites, and mean habitations to dwell in: now if God made no better provision for these persons, whom he thus calls, he would, speaking after the manner of men, be ashamed to be called their God: but lo! though they are the *poor of this world*, yet they are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*: for these poor ragged saints, that fare hard, and dwell in lowly cottages here, he has prepared *a city*, fit for kings and princes to dwell in, with plenty of all things, grand and pleasing, suitable thereunto: He takes these beggars from the dunghill, and sets them among princes, and causes them to inherit the throne of glory; and therefore he is not ashamed to be called their God: but on the contrary exults, rejoices, glories in it, that he is their God; and shows himself to be glorious as their covenant-God, by making such a munificent preparation and provision for his covenant-people: for the words are what *Rhetoricians* call a *Mimesis*, by which less is expressed than is designed. The *city* prepared, is the same with the *better country*, as before explained, even the future happiness of the saints in heaven; and this is of God's preparing, and of his only, and is given to none but those, *for whom*, says Christ, *it is prepared of my Father*. And it is *a kingdom prepared by him* in his eternal purposes and decrees, *from the foundation of the world*; see *Matt. xx. 23.* and *chap. xxv. 34*. And the chosen vessels of mercy are afore prepared for this glory; and in time are made meet and ready for it, through the righteousness of Christ

put upon them, and by his Spirit and grace in them ; and Christ he is gone to prepare a place in this city, in this better country, by his presence and prevalent intercession, for every one of his people, and will come again and take them to himself, *that where he is, they may be also*, John xiv. 2, 3.

I shall close all with a word or two : what has been said may serve to wean us from this world, and draw off our hearts from it, and cause us to sit loose unto it, and all things in it ; since this is not our rest, our house, our home, our native place ; that is in *another country* : and this may be of use to quicken our desires after another world, to seek a better country, and look for it ; and this may also point out to us the happiness of those that are gone before us, they are in this better country, and are in better company. — But I forbear saying any more— *.

SERMON

* The following character was wrote by the Doctor and found among his papers, though not delivered from the pulpit.

It pleased God to call her by his grace in the early time of life, and in a place of great darkness and ignorance ; where there were scarce any, or very few professors of religion ; so that when she took up a profession of it, she appeared very singular, and became the object of the scoffs and jeers of her neighbours and former acquaintance ; but this did not deter her from pursuing the good ways of God she had entered into, and from persisting in them. She soon drank in the doctrines of the free grace of God in the salvation of men by Christ, of which she had a comfortable experience.

In the after-time of her life, her afflictions and troubles were many, but under all she was favoured with divine supports, and was frequently indulged with gracious words of promise on different occasions, and yet often doubting and fearing : for none could have meaner and more humble thoughts of themselves than she always had, looking upon herself as *less than the least of all saints*.

Lord's days were usually delightful to her ; she often met with refreshings from the presence of God in them ; which made her earnestly desire the return of them ; and when the day drew nigh, longed until the morning was, and the time came to attend public worship. The loss of these precious opportunities, through her long confinement, was greatly lamented by her.

She was one that truly feared God, and was ever desirous of having a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, and of doing her duty to both ; careful as much as in her lay to give no offence by word or deed, to the world or to the church of God ; studying the things which make for peace among all with whom she was concerned ; as her whole deportment, for the space of between forty and fifty years, has abundantly shewn, of which many here are witnesses.

Her last affliction, though long, tedious and painful, was borne with the greatest patience ; that passage of scripture was truly verified in her, *Tribulation works patience* ; and though she was not carried out, as her expression was, which she observed some were on their dying beds, in raptures of joy and strong expressions of faith, yet it pleased God to drop comforts into her soul at certain times ; and sometimes she would be longing to be at home in her Father's house, saying, “*Let me go, O let me go to my Father's house* :” repeating it over and over again.

The scripture which has now been discoursed on, was expressed by her as it had been at times before, with great pleasure and delight ; and also those words, *them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*. In a view of her own soul-affairs, and those of her family, those words appeared to be of considerable use, and were quieting and comfortable to her, *casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*.

But a few Lord's days ago, as her surviving relative was taking his leave of her, coming hither to preach, she expressed the following words with strong application to herself, *having made peace strong*.

S E R M O N XXXV.

The Free Grace of God exalted in the Character of the Apostle Paul.

Preached at St Albans, Hertfordshire, May 26, 1765.

1 COR. XV. 10.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am.

THE apostle is treating in the context of the important doctrine of the resurrection of Christ from the dead: he asserts, *that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures*, which foretold he should rise, and as in fact he did; of this he produces ocular testimonies, as that “he was seen after his “resurrection of Cephas, that is, Peter, and then of the twelve apostles; next “of above five hundred brethren at once; after that of James, then of all the “apostles; and last of all he was seen by himself.” And it seems by his own account, that he was seen by him more than once; as at his conversion, when a light shone around him, and he not only heard the voice of Christ, but he appeared to him, and made him a minister and witness of what he saw and heard, and of what should hereafter be made known unto him; nor was he, as he says, *disobedient to the heavenly vision*; when he was “caught up into the third heaven, and heard and saw things unspeakable, and not lawful to be uttered;” which might be at the time of his conversion also: he doubtless had a sight of

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Christ

through the blood of his cross: and with the greatest vehemency and eagerness added, **AND FOR ME TOO;** and repeated it, **AND FOR ME TOO.**

One morning, being asked how she did, she declared she had much comfort that night in her meditations on the sufferings of Christ for her, in comparison of which her afflictions, though heavy, were but light.—At another time, those words were very soaying, supporting and satisfying to her, *nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure;* and very often declared she had comfort, but had not strength to express it; and indeed the enemy of souls was kept off from her through the whole, and was not suffered, as far as could be discerned, to disturb and distress her in the least; the last words of thy moment that were heard from her, were, when asked whether she had comfort, she said, she had, but not always alike; and added, *the covenant is sure;* quickly after this she grew delirious, and slept much, till death seized her; of which she seemed to be sensible by the motions of lifting up her hands, and by the words she uttered, which were *Lord, Lord!*—When something followed not understood by those that stood by, and then drawing her breath quicker, immediately, without a sigh or groan, fell asleep in the arms of Jesus.

* *Acts xxvi. 16, 19.*

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Christ in his human nature, as risen and ascended to heaven ; and after all this, when he was come to *Jerusalem* again, and was praying in the temple, he fell into a trance ; and, says he, *I saw him*^b, meaning Christ, as well as heard the commission, instructions, and directions, he gave him ; when he was *as one born out of due time* ; which is not to be understood of him literally and in a natural sense, as if he was born before his time, of which we have no where any intimation, but figuratively : and the allusion is either, as some think, to a post-humous birth, the birth of one after the death of his father, to which there was something similar in the apostle's case. The rest of the apostles were called unto and invested with the office of an apostle whilst Christ, their everlasting Father, was here on earth ; but the apostle was invested with it after his death, and resurrection from the dead : or rather, the allusion is to an abortive or untimely birth, which has never seen the sun, nor known any thing ; and is not known, has no name, and is of no account : this figurative phrase is explained by what follows, *for I am the least of the apostles* ; and it is no wonder that he should call himself the least of the apostles, when he elsewhere says, that he was *less than the least of all saints*^c ; for if less than the least of all saints, he must be the least of the apostles ; though, when he was traduced by the false teachers, and his character impeached, and the gospel and interest of Christ were like to suffer by those means, he exerted himself and magnified his office ; and asserted, that he was *not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles*^d ; though he here adds, *that am not meet to be called an apostle* ; as indeed no one was ; none are meet or deserving of themselves to be members of gospel-churches, to have *a place and a name there better than that of sons and daughters* ; nor to be ordinary ministers of the word, and still less to be the apostles of Jesus Christ. The reason given why he entertained such low and mean thoughts of himself, is, *because*, says he, *I persecuted the church of God* ; of which much notice is taken by the divine historian, that the grace of God in the conversion of the apostle, might be set off with a greater foil ; it is observed that “the clothes of those that stoned *Stephen*” were laid at his feet to be kept by him ; that he was consenting to the death of *Stephen* ; that he made havock of the church, haling men and women to prison ; that he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, and desired and took letters of the high priest, empowering him to take up any at *Damascus* he found in the christian way, and to bring them to *Jerusalem*^e ; and, according to his own account, he gave his voice against them, when put to death, punished them in every synagogue ; compelled them to blaspheme, and persecuted them to strange cities, being *exceeding mad against them*.

^b *Acts xxii. 17, 18.*

^c *Ephes. iii. 8.*

^d *2 Cor. xi. 5. and xii. 11.*

^e *Acts vii. 58. and viii. 1, 3. and ix. 1, 2.*

sben^t. Now the sense of all this evil dwelt upon his mind, remained with him, and kept him humble all his days, amidst all his grace, gifts, attainments and usefulness. So every saint has something or other to keep him humble, indwelling sin, or Satan's temptations, or afflictions in the world; and then follow the words first read, *but by the grace of God I am what I am*; be I what I am, greater or lesser, as a man, a saint, a minister, and an apostle, I am just such an one as it is the will of God I should be; *by his grace I am what I am*. Two things I observe from hence:

- I. That the apostle was *something*, not a mere non-entity, he had a being, and was in some circumstances; which is supposed and implied in the phrase, *I am what I am*:
- II. That be that something he was, what it may, *that he was by the grace of God*.

I. That the apostle was *something*; he had an existence and was in circumstances, on many accounts, not mean and despicable. There is a sense indeed in which he was *nothing*, and which he himself observes, *though I be nothing*^t; not absolutely; he was a man, had the integral parts of a man; a body and a soul; a body consisting of flesh, blood and bones; and though of the earth earthly, sprung out of the dust, and would return to dust again; yet was something, and would be even in that state; for dust is something: and besides he had a rational soul, possessed of intellectual powers and faculties; a spirit immaterial and immortal, and of more worth than a world; *for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* or *what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*^b But in a comparative sense he was nothing, that is, when compared with God, the everlasting I AM, the fountain of being, the Being of beings: so some things in comparison of others that are greatly more excellent, are represented at non-entities; thus earthly riches, when compared with the durable, solid and substantial riches of grace and glory, are said to be *that which is not*^c; in like manner, the duration of a creature, in comparison of the eternity of God, is nothing. *Mine age*, says David, *is as nothing before thee*^d; not to be mentioned with his days and years, which are throughout all generations and without beginning; men of the greatest name and figure are not to be spoken of with him; and not only single individuals, but even *all nations before him are as nothing*; and could there be any thing less than nothing, they would be that; *they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity*^e.

Moreover

^a Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

^b 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

^c Matt. xvi. 16.

^d Prov. xxiii. 6.

^e Psalm xxxix. 5.

^f Isa. xl. 17.

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day, and are renewed every day; and having food and raiment, we should not only be therewith content, but be thankful for them; since, as good old Jacob says, *we are not worthy of the least of all the mercies shewed us*; not of the least morsel of bread we eat, nor of the clothes we wear: and how sensible of the divine goodness was that patriarch to the last; and how thankful for it? *The God that fed me all my life long until this day—bless the lads*^a. Some have a greater affluence of the good things of this life than others; more they have than they can make use of themselves, and which are given them for the relief of others; these are wisdom's left-hand-blessings. When David and his princes offered so largely and so willingly towards the building of the temple, he acknowledges it was all of God, both the ability and the willing mind; *Riches and honour come of thee—Who am I, and what is my people, that we shou'd be able to offer so willingly after this sort! For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee!*^b Riches are the property of God, he gives and takes them away at his pleasure, and this he does to shew his sovereignty; he made Job the greatest man in all the east for wealth and worldly substance, and in one day stripped him of it all; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*^c; it is all according to his good pleasure. All the endowments of the mind, the natural parts and abilities of men, their intellectual and reasoning powers and faculties, are of God; *There is a spirit in man, a rational spirit, and that is of God, a gift of his to men: The inspiration of the almighty, giveth them understanding*^d; which distinguishes men from brutes, and gives them the pre-eminence to them; for God is he, *who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven*^e. Now whatever the apostle had of this kind, as well as of other things, it was through the favour and good-will of God: as he certainly was a man of great natural abilities, of strong reasoning powers, his enemies themselves being witnesses; *his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful*^f; written in a masculine style, and full of strong nervous reasonings and arguments, they were not able to answer.

Secondly, What he was as a minister and an apostle, was through the favour and good-will of God; he did not become one of himself, through his own attainments, or by any merits of his; for he before says, he was *not meet to be called an Apostle*; nor was he made a minister of the gospel, or an apostle, by man; this he disavows: *Paul an apostle, not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father*; the commission and qualifications he had as such, were not of men, but of God; the gospel he preached, the doctrines of it he delivered, and the instructions he had for that purpose, were not *after men*, neither

^a Gen xxxii. 10.^b 1 Chron. xxix 13, 14.^c Job i. 3, 21.^d Job xxxii. 8.^e Job xxxv. 11.^f 2 Cor. x. 10.

neither received he them of men, nor was he taught them but by the revelation of Jesus Christ^a: it was not owing to his education, to his being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and instructed in all the learning of those times, which qualified him for a minister of the word; this served only to make him a keener adversary, and a more bitter enemy to Christ and his gospel. Whenever he speaks of his being put into the ministry, he attributes it to the grace and favour of God; making mention of the gospel, he adds, *whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of this power: unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given;* that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ^b: and that he was an extraordinary minister, an apostle of Christ, he ascribes to the grace of God; *by whom we have received grace and apostleship*^c; that is, grace to make us apostles, and to qualify for that office: and ordinary ministers of the word become such through gifts, which Christ, their ascended Lord and King, has received for men, and gives to men; and which gifts are of grace and free favour dispensed to whosoever he pleases; to some more, and others less, but all of grace: *having gifts differing according to the grace that is given us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith*^d: and again, *as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*^e; so that whatever any one is as a minister of the word, he is so by the gift of grace, by the free grace and favour of God.

Thirdly; What the apostle was as a saint, he was by the grace of God, as every saint is; what distinguishes a saint from a sinner, or one man from another, is entirely owing to the grace and free favour of God.

i. Was the apostle a chosen vessel, not only to preach the gospel, but chosen to grace here and glory hereafter, as he undoubtedly was; he often puts himself among the chosen ones; thus, speaking of the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory, he adds, *even us whom he hath called*^f; and in another place, *according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love*^g: this he was by the grace of God, as all the chosen ones be; for they are chosen, not for any good works done by them, or foreseen to be done by them; for the act of election passed before any were done by them, and without respect to any; for *the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth*^h: besides good works are the fruits and effects of election, and therefore cannot be the cause of it; *we are his workmanship, created in Christ*.

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Jesus

^a Gal. i. 11, 12.^b Ephes. iii. 7, 8.^c Rom. 9. 5.^d Rom. 12. 6.^e 1 Pet. iv. 10.^f Rom. ix. 6.^g Ephes. ii. 4.^h Rom. ix. 10.

Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them^m: to which add, that they are the evidences of election unto others; hence that exhortation of the apostle, *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*ⁿ; not election by calling, though the latter is an evidence of the former, since both are to be made sure; and therefore must be by some third thing, and that is good works; by which these are made not sure in themselves; nor sure to the saints, but to the world; which give to them a certain evidence that the saints are, what they profess to be, the chosen and called of God; and is the best evidence they are capable of giving to the world of those things, and of their receiving from them.

Nor is it owing to the holiness of men, either internal or external, that any are chosen to eternal life. Men are chosen, not because they are holy, but that they should be holy and without blame; they are chosen not for, but through sanctification of the spirit^o; they are chosen to it as an end, and through it as a mean, and it is insured by election. And so far is this doctrine from being a licentious one, as it is ignorantly traduced by some, that it is the source and spring of all real holiness that has been in the world since the fall of Adam; had not God reserved to himself a remnant according to the election of grace, the whole world had been as Sodom and Gomorrah, both for sin and for punishment; there would have been no such thing as holiness among the sons of Adam. Nor is the choice of men owing to their faith; they are chosen not for their belief, but through the belief of the truth, through faith in Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life: faith is the fruit and effect of election, and is secured and ascertained by it; as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed^p; hence faith is called the faith of God's elect^q, because it is a consequent of their election, and is peculiar to them. It remains that men are what they are, as chosen ones, not by any thing of theirs, but by the grace, favour, and good-will of God; hence this act of God is called the election of grace, on which the apostle argues in this strong and nervous manner; if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: — for grace is not grace, unless it is altogether free; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work^r; to blend and confound them together, is to destroy the nature and use of both.

2. Was the apostle an adopted son of God? this he was by the grace of God; which is the next spiritual blessing that follows election, in that famous first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians; and where the apostle ranks himself among those that are predestinated to the adoption of children, and which he ascribes to the good-will and pleasure of God; having predestinated us unto the adoption

^m Ephes. ii. 20.

ⁿ Acts xii. 48.

^o 2 Peter i. 10.

^p Titus i. 1.

^q Ephes. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

^r Rom. xi. 5, 6.

*adoption of cbildren by Jesus Cbrift to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will*¹. None are the children of God through any merits of their own, for they are *by nature cbildren of wrath, as others*²; there is no reason or motive in them that should move the Lord to put them among the children; it need not be wondered at to hear him say, *how shall I put thee among the cbildren, so unlovely, so unworthy!* but it is amazing what follows, *thou shalt call me my Father, and not turn away from me*³. In civil adoption there is commonly something in the adopted, or relative to it, that induces the adopter to take the step he does; there are but two instances of this kind in scripture, I think, and they both suggest something of this nature; the one is the adoption of *Moses* by *Pbaroob's* daughter, of whom it is said, that he was *a goodly cbild, exceeding fair and lovely to look upon*, which attracted the affections of the princess, as well as its case and circumstances moved her compassion; the other is the adoption of *Ester* by *Mordecai*, of whom it is remarked, that *the maid was fair and beautiful*, and besides was *a relation of Mordecai*; but in the case of divine adoption, there is nothing lovely and amiable in the adopted, but all the reverse, like the wretched infant *cast out in the open field to the losibg of its person in the day it was born*⁴; wherefore the apostle *John* breaks forth in this pathetic manner, in the view of this amazing blessing; *Bebold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*⁵! it is by the unmerited love, free favour and good-will of God, that saints are what they are in this sense; by the grace of God in predestination to this blessing, which, as before observed, is according to the good pleasure of his will; by the grace of God in the covenant, which is a covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure, full of all spiritual blessings, called *the sure mercies of David*, because they flow from the grace, mercy, and favour of God in Christ; in which this blessing of grace, adoption, is provided and secured; and which runs thus, without any condition required; *I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*⁶: it is also by and through the grace of Christ, who has redeemed his that were under the law, that they *might receive the adoption of cbildren*⁷, as a free-grace-gift; and to as many as receive him, that is, believe in him, he gives power, right and privilege, to *become the sons of God*⁸; and it is by the grace of the Spirit that this blessing is manifested, applied, and bore witness to, who is therefore called *the Spirit of adoption*⁹.

3. Was the apostle redeemed by Christ? as without doubt he was, and he had the faith of assurance of interest in this blessing of redemption; which stands next in order to election and adoption, in the abovementioned chapter, and

¹ Ephes. i. 5.² Ezek. xvi. 5.³ Gal. iv. 5.⁴ Ephes. ii. 3.⁵ 1 John iii. 1.⁶ John i. 12.⁷ Jer. iii. 19.⁸ 2 Cor. vi. 18.⁹ Rom. viii. 15.

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where the apostle puts himself among the redeemed ones, *in whom we have redemption through his blood*^c; this he was by the grace of God; for though redemption is by the blood of Christ, it is according to the riches of God's grace; though it cost Christ dear, his blood and life, it is free to the redeemed; it is without money and without price to them; it was the free grace of God that provided Christ to be the Redeemer and Saviour, called him to this work, appointed him to do it, and promised him as such; it was owing to the grace of God that he was sent in the fulness of time to redeem men; at his incarnation, the first step to it, the angels sung, *peace on earth, good-will to men*^d; the love, grace, favour and good-will of God, are in a most wonderful manner displayed in the mission of Christ to obtain redemption for men. *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that is, to be the Saviour of men; in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him; herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*^e; it is owing to the grace, favour and good-will of God to men, that Christ was delivered up for them, into the hands of justice and death; it was by the grace of God he *suffered death for every man*^f; that is, suffered death for every one of the sons he brings to glory, for every one of the brethren he is not ashamed to own, for every one of the children given unto him, as appears from the context. As *Abraham shewed his love to God in not withholding his son, his only son, his beloved son*; so God has shewn his love, favour and good-will to men, in not sparing, but sending and giving his own, his only begotten son, his well-beloved son, to suffer and die for them, in order to redeem them: and to be a redeemed one, is an instance of distinguishing grace; for they that are redeemed, are *redeemed from among men, out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation*; so that by the grace of God they are what they are.

4. Was the apostle a justified person? as he certainly was; he was so by the grace of God; not by any works or merits of his: these he disclaims; *for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified*^g; though he was not conscious of any unfaithfulness in his ministry, yet this was not the matter of his justification before God; nay had he been unconscious of any sin then in him, or done by him, he knew he could not be justified thereby from former sins committed by him; and therefore he desired to be *found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith*^h; the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed of God, and received by faith: if then, *Abraham, or any other, were justified by works, they would have whereof to glory*; but boasting is excluded in the article of justification, not by the law

of

^c Ephes. i. 7.

^d Luke ii. 14.

^e John. iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9, 10.

^f Heb. ii. 9.

^g 1 Cor. iv. 4.

^h Phil. iii. 9.

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of works, but by the doctrine of faith. Justification cannot be by works, because they are imperfect; and if a justifying righteousness was by them, the death of Christ would be in vain; and the grace of God frustrated; but it is safest to conclude with the apostle, *that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*¹; and who always ascribes justification to the free grace of God. In one place he says, *being justified by his grace*; and as if it was not strongly enough expressed, he elsewhere says, *being justified freely by his grace*²; grace moved God to send his Son to bring in everlasting righteousness, and Christ to work it out; God of his grace imputes it to his people, without works; and faith by which they receive it, is a free-grace-gift of his; and they that receive the gift of righteousness, receive abundance of grace in it and with it.

5. Was the apostle a pardoned sinner? of which there can be no question; this he was, not through any merit of his, but by the grace of God; *I obtained mercy*, says he, that is, pardoning grace and mercy, even though he had been *a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious*; and he expresses the abundance of grace displayed herein, *the grace of our Lord*, adds he, *was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is Christ Jesus*³: pardon of sin, though through the blood of Christ which was shed for it, yet is according to the riches of grace; all that are pardoned, are pardoned, not through any deservings of theirs, for all alike have sinned, and all the world is become guilty before God; and the law pronounces condemnation and death without mercy; if any are pardoned it is by the grace of God through the blood and sacrifice of Christ: not even for their repentance and humiliation; truly gracious souls do repent of sin, and are humble for it; but this is not the cause of their pardon; what of this kind is most genuine and evangelical, flows from a sense of pardon applied; first, souls look to Christ by faith for pardon through his blood, and then they mourn for sins pardoned; and never do they mourn better and more kindly, or are more ashamed and confounded because of their sins, than when they are most satisfied that God is pacified towards them for all that they have done: nor is it owing to their confession of sin, and departure from it, that any are pardoned. Such who have received the grace of God in truth, will confess their sins and depart from them, and such receive mercy, but not as the cause of it; but pardoning mercy with God is used as a motive to forsake sin, *Isai. lv. 7*. And though when men confess their sins, God is just and faithful to forgive them their sins, yet it is not on account of their confession, but on account of the blood of his Son, that his justice and faithfulness appear in the forgiveness of it. Forgiveness of sin is always attributed to the multitude of mercy in God, to the tender mercy of our God, to the riches of his grace, and to the covenant of his grace, in which this blessing is provided⁴.

6. Was

¹ Rom. iii. 28. ² Titus iii. 7. ³ Rom. iii. 24. ⁴ 1 Tim. i. 13, 14.
Heb. viii. 12. See Psal. li. 1. Luke i. 78. Ephes. i. 7.

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6. Was the apostle regenerated, called, converted, sanctified? it was all by the grace of God; and so the regeneration, vocation, conversion and sanctification of every one. Regeneration is necessary to salvation; it is in this way God saves his people, and without it none can see nor enter into the kingdom of heaven; and this is *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God*; of the will, power, and grace of God, who *of his own will, of his sovereign good-will and pleasure, begets men with the word of truth*^m: effectual vocation is of grace; the apostle ascribes his calling to grace, *when it pleased God—who called me by his grace*ⁿ; and whoever are called, are *called with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his (God's) purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus before the world began*^o. Conversion is not by might or power of men, but by the Spirit of the Lord, by his mighty and efficacious grace; they are turned when he turns them, and not before. Sanctification is by the Spirit of God, and not by the will of men: if any are partakers of sanctification, and of the several parts of it, it is by the grace of God: have any repentance unto life unto salvation, which needeth not to be repented of, it is a grant from God, a gift of Christ, who is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, *to give repentance unto Israel*^p. God may give men space to repent, but if he does not give them grace to repent, they never will. No means whatever are sufficient of themselves; not the greatest mercies; if any thing, one would think, the goodness of God would lead men to repentance, but it does not; nor the severest judgments, as famine, pestilence, the sword, &c. For notwithstanding these, men return not to the Lord^q. The most awakening ministry, such as that of John the Baptist, who preached the doctrine of repentance, will not be effectual of itself, as facts shew; and indeed, unless God, by his powerful and efficacious grace, takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh, no man will repent of his sins: faith in Christ is the gift of God, and not of a man's self; it is given to men to believe; nor can any come to Christ, that is, believe in him, unless it is given him of the Father; and hope, when it is a good one, firm and sure and well founded, it is given, and given *through grace*^r; and the same may be said of every grace of the Spirit, and of every part and branch of sanctification, which is begun in grace, and is compleated by it.

7. Did the apostle conduct his life, conversation, and walk, becoming the character he bore as an apostle, a minister, and a saint? this was by the grace of God, and to it he ascribes it; *our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards*^s; and

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^m John i. 13. James i. 18.ⁿ Gal. i. 15.^o 2 Tim. i. 9.^p Acts xi. 18. and v. 31.^q See Amos iv. 6—11.^r Ephes. ii. 8. 2 Thess. ii. 16.^s 2 Cor. i. 12.

it is *the grace of God* that teaches and enables the saints to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*¹; and if men persevere in faith and holiness unto the end, it is to be ascribed to the grace and power of God, by which *t_hey are kept through faith unto salvation*. In a word, it is by the grace of God saints are what they are; by the grace of God they have what they have; and by the grace of God they do what they do. Wherefore,

1. Let us give the glory of all we have, are, and do, to the grace of God: the end God has in all he does, in things spiritual, and relative to our salvation, is *the glory of his grace*²; and our concern should be, as much as in us lies, that this end be answered; and therefore not unto ourselves, to any works, merits, and deserts of ours, but to the grace of God, be all the glory.

2. Let us endeavour to hold fast the doctrines of grace, whereby the glory of the grace of God is maintained; for men may *fail of the grace of God*³, that is, of the doctrines of grace; may come short of them, drop and deny them; for whoever seek for justification and salvation by the works of the law, are *fallen from grace*⁴, that is, from the doctrine of grace; for from the love and favour of God in his heart, and from the grace of God implanted in the hearts of his people, there can be no falling.

3. Let us take care that the *grace of God* is not received *in vain*⁵; that is, the gospel of the grace of God, which may be received and professed in vain, when the professors of it are not careful to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, by a becoming life and conversation; and when they turn the grace of God, the doctrines of it into lasciviousness, and abuse it to wicked purposes.

4. Let us, such who are truly partakers of the grace of God, be encouraged to expect glory; for to whomsoever God gives grace he gives glory; these are inseparably connected together; *whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified*⁶: what we now are, we are by the grace of God; but it doth not yet appear *what we shall be*; but we should be looking, waiting for, and expecting the appearance of Christ, when *we shall be like him, and see him as he is*⁷.

S E R M O N

¹ Tit. ii. 12. ² Ephes. i. 6. ³ Heb. xii. 15. ⁴ Gal. v. 4.

² 2 Cor. vi. 1. ⁵ Rom. viii. 30. ⁶ 1 John iii. 2.

⁷ The reason why this Sermon is placed among the Funeral Discourses, is, that it was first preached on account of the death of the Reverend Mr JOHN BRAINS. But as he had left directions not to have any Funeral Sermon preached for him, the character then given of this great and good man was obliged to be but short: The following is the substance of what was then delivered: —I am debarred from saying so much of him, as otherwise I could do, we both having been

born

S E R M O N XXXVI.

The faithful Minister of Christ crowned.

Occasioned by the Death of the Reverend Mr WILLIAM ANDERSON.

Preached September 20, 1767.

2 TIMOTHY IV. 6, 7.

I have fought a (or the) good fight, I have finished my (the) course, I have kept the faith : benceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

THESE words are read unto you on account of the death of Mr WILLIAM ANDERSON, late minister of the gospel. It was the latter of these two verses the deceased took notice of on his death-bed, and repeated with a singular appropriation to himself, *benceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, &c.* for which reason it is judged a proper subject of a funeral discourse. I have read both verses, because there is a close connection between them, and they depend one on another; and the sense of the one cannot be understood so fully and clearly without the other; and the beauty of the passage would otherwise be greatly lost. The apostle, in the preceding part of the chapter, gives a strict charge to Timothy, in a very solemn manner, before God and his son Jesus Christ, whom he describes as *judge of quick and dead*: the charge is, to perform

born in the same place, and myself some years older than him, and from his being among the first-fruits of my Ministry.—I might take notice of his natural and acquired abilities, his great understanding, clear light, and sound judgment in the doctrines of the gospel, and the great and deep things of God:—Of his zeal, skill and courage in vindicating important truths, published by him to the world, by which he, *being dead, yet speaks*. In fine, I might observe to you, that his walk and conversation in the world, was honourable and ornamental to the profession which he made, and suitable to the character he sustained, as a Minister of Jesus Christ, all which endeared him to his friends.—But I am forbid to speak any thing more.

form diligently the several parts of his ministerial office, the particulars of which you may read at your leisure; and to urge him the more strongly to attend to this charge, he suggests to him, that it was delivered by him as a dying man; and that this was the last time he might expect to have any charge, counsel, directions, and instructions from him; *for*, says he, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand*; phrases very significant, and very expressive of his death: the former of them represents his death as a sacrifice, *I am ready to be offered*, or to be poured forth as a libation or drink-offering; not by way of sacrifice, to make atonement for sin, either his own or others, this he knew was made by the sacrifice of Christ; but by way of martyrdom, as a victim to the cause of truth, for the sake of the gospel, and the confirmation of it: and if laying down his life would be of any service to the interest of Christ and his people, he was ready to do it with all cheerfulness and pleasure; as he elsewhere says^a, *yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.* The latter phrase, *the time of my departure is at band*; is an expression of death in a very familiar manner; a way of speaking used by our Lord, and by our apostle in another place^b; signifying, that death is not the annihilation of men, there is a state of existence after it; it is only *a departing elsewhere*: it is indeed a dissolution of the union between soul and body, an *analysis*, as the word in the text is, or a resolution of the body into its original principles; a *departure* out of one world into another; a removing, as it were, from one house to another, from an *earthly house of this tabernacle, to an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; for which there is a *time* fixed, beyond which life cannot pass: and this the apostle, with respect to himself, knew was *at band*; and which he might conclude, either from his years, or rather from the state and situation in which he was, being in bonds for the gospel, and having been brought before *Nero* a second time; and perhaps the sentence of death was passed upon him by that Emperor, and the dead warrant was come for his execution, or at least he soon expected it; or he might know his death was near, by an impulse upon his mind, and a particular revelation from God; and in the cheerful view of it he expresses the words first read. In which may be observed,

I. A pleasing reflection on his past conduct, or on what through the grace of God he had been enabled to do. *First, He had fought a good fight. Secondly, Had finished his course. Thirdly Had kept the faith.*

II. A delightful and comfortable prospect, and the firm belief he had of future happiness; which happiness is, *First, Expressed by a crown, by*

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a crown

^a Phil. ii. 17.

^b John xiii. 1. Phil. i. 23.

with the preparation of the gospel of peace; and every man his sword on his thigh^s; the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: and being thus armed, their business is to fight the battles of the Lord; to play the men for their God, and the cities of their God; for Christ, and for his interest: and, as they have enemies in common with other Christians, and by whom they are more especially assaulted, they fight with them.

1. With the corruptions of their own hearts, those *fleshly lusts which war against the soul; striving against sin^b*, or acting the part of an antagonist with it, even indwelling sin: and the great apostle *Paul*, though so holy a man, was not exempt from this combat. He found *a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind^c*: he found himself under a necessity of *keeping under his body*, the body of sin, and not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts of it; but to keep a strict eye and hand over it, and to use a kind of severe discipline with it, lest whilst he *preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away^d*: but now the conflict was over; and he, being on the shores of eternity, saw those spiritual enemies, the *Egyptians* who had distressed him, all slain and dead, and found himself a triumphant conqueror over them.

2. With Satan, and his principalities and powers. None of the saints in this life are free from Satan's temptations; nay, generally speaking, the most eminent, fruitful, and useful of them, are most furiously assaulted by him. *Joseph* was *a fruitful boagh by a well*; and the archers shot at him, and sorely grieved him, though his *bow abode in strength^e*. At those who are the most eminent for grace and usefulness, he lets fly his fiery darts thick and fast: the apostle *Paul* did not escape his buffetings; *a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan* was sent to *buffet him^f*; he had many combats with him: *we wrestle, I and other ministers, as well as the rest of saints, against principalities, against powers^g*; even the powers of darkness, Satan and his angels; and ministers have their peculiar temptations, with which they are assaulted by him; many are the difficulties, obstructions and impediments, he throws in their way; our apostle was not clear of them: *we would have come to you, says he, writing to the Thessalonians (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindered us^h*; but now the battle with him was over, and Satan was bruised under his feet.

3. With the world, the reproaches and persecutions of it, and a great fight of afflictions in it: and particularly ministers have to do with false teachers in it, who resist the truth, as *James* and *Jambres* resisted *Moses*. Some think such as these were the *beasts at Ephesus* the apostle fought with; men, comparable to beasts, wolves in sheep's clothing, which entered the flock, and did damage to it by their pernicious doctrines; with whom the apostle had disputes in the

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^s Cant. iii. 7, 8.

^b Gen. xlix. 22—24.

^a Heb. xii. 4.

^c Cor. xiii. 9.

^d Rom. vii. 23.

^e Ephes. vi. 12.

^f 1 Cor. ix. 27.

^g 1 Thess. iii. 18.

so the apostle calls his, *that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus*^u, and now it was just finishing; he was come to the end of his line, to *Rome*, where he was to bear his last testimony for Christ^v: all these three may be taken into the sense of the passage, the course of his life, his christian race, and the course of his ministry; for they were all finished together.

Thirdly, The apostle observes, with like pleasure, that he had *kept the faith*: meaning, not the grace of faith; for though that is an abiding grace, and cannot be lost; is much more precious than gold, because that may perish, but this cannot; yet it is not in any man's own keeping; it is preserved and supported by Christ, through his powerful mediation and intercession; who, as he prayed for *Peter*, so he prays for all his ministers, and all his saints, that their *faith fail not*; he is the *author*, and he is the *finisher* of it^x: nor is a profession of faith meant; for though believers ought, and they are encouraged to hold fast the profession of their faith, from the priesthood of Christ, and the promises of God; yet this is what formal professors may do, and the foolish virgins did; they took their lamps of profession, and trimmed them too, so that they looked bright and splendid as to outward show; and they held and kept them likewise until the coming of the bridegroom: rather the doctrine of faith is intended, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to the trust of the apostle; a sacred depositum lodged in his hands, which he was careful to keep, and had kept; what he exhorted *Titus* and *Timothy* to do, he had done himself, namely, to *hold fast the faithful word*; to *hold fast the form of sound words*, and *keep the good thing committed to them*^y; this he had done, and had not suffered the gospel to be wrenched out of his hands, neither through the force of furious persecutors, nor through the art and sophistry of false teachers: unless it can be thought his *fidelity* is meant; God, when he put him into the ministry, counted him *faithful*, having made him so; and through the grace of God, he maintained his integrity, kept his fidelity; which appeared in declaring the whole counsel of God, and in keeping back nothing that was profitable to the saints; and he continued *faithful unto death*; and now, *benceforth* *λοιπὸν*, it remained, and nothing else remained for him to do, but to receive the *crown of life* and *righteousness*. Which brings me to consider,

II. The delightful and comfortable prospect, and firm belief the apostle had of his future happiness; which,

First, Is described by a *crown*, by a *crown of righteousness*, by a *crown laid up*, and that for *him* in particular.

i. It

^u Acts xiii. 25. and xx. 24.

^v Acts xxiii. 11.

^x Luke xxii. 32. Heb. xii. 2.

^y Titus i. 9. 2 Tim. i. 13, 14.

1. It is described by a *crown*; either, (1.) In allusion to royal crowns, such as are wore by kings and princes; and that partly for the glory of it, nothing being more glorious, more grand, and more august than a crown: and this is called *a crown of glory*, or a glorious crown; and indeed it excels all others in glory: crowns of gold are weighty things, but do not endure always; but the heavenly happiness is *an eternal weight of glory*¹: this will consist of a glory put upon the saints; upon their bodies, which, though sown in dishonour, will be raised in glory, and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and upon their souls, which will be possessed of perfect knowledge, purity and holiness: and of a glory that will be revealed in them, and that will be revealed to them, and beheld by them, even the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; with whom they will appear in glory, and be for ever with him to behold his glory. And partly the heavenly happiness may be described by such a crown as suitable to the character of saints, who are made kings, as well as priests unto God by Christ; and who shall reign as such on earth, and that for the space of a thousand years, and then reign with him for ever in heaven². Nor are they mere titular kings; they have not only the title of kings, but they have a kingdom, a kingdom of grace now, which cannot be moved, and which lies in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*: and they are heirs of another kingdom; the kingdom of glory, prepared for them from the foundation of the world; and though they were in their nature-state beggars upon the dunghill, they are raised from thence to inherit the throne of glory; and thrones will be placed for them to sit upon; yea, every overcomer will sit down with Christ on his throne: and so likewise crowns are prepared for them; thus the four and twenty elders, the representatives of gospel-churches, and the members of them, are said to have *on their beads crowns of gold*³. Or rather,

(2.) The future happiness is described by a crown, in allusion to crowns given to conquerors in the Grecian exercises; one of which was running of races, as well as fighting, wrestling, &c. to which the apostle manifestly alludes in 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. *Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize: so run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.* The apostle justly observes, that in those races men strove for mastery; and indeed for that only, for victory; merely for the honour and glory of being conquerors: as for the crowns that were given them, they were nothing worth, being only garlands made of the branches or leaves of laurel, or of olive, or of pines, and sometimes of parsley-leaves, things of no intrinsic value; nor was it for the sake of those they ran, but for the honour annexed to them, of being crowned with them. But the crown which the christian

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

² Rev. i. 6. and v. 10. and xx. 6. and xxii. 5.

³ Rev. iv. 4.

tian racer, being a conqueror, obtains, is of real worth and value; sometimes expressed by the true riches, real and substantial; by an house, not made with hands; by an inheritance of the saints in light; by a city which has foundations; and by a kingdom and glory. The crown run for in the Grecian games was a *corruptible* one: the Corinthians knew full well what the apostle meant by a *corruptible crown*; for the *Isthmian* races were ran in their neighbourhood, and the presidents and judges ^y were of their city; and they must be sensible of the propriety of this epithet *corruptible*, since the crowns given to the conquerors in those races, were made of nothing but parsley ^z; some say, dried: hence we read of persons being ornamented and honoured with Corinthian parfles ^x, or parsley-crowns; whereas the heavenly happiness is an *incorrumpible* crown: so when it is spoken of as an inheritance, it is said to be an *incorrumpible one*^b; it cannot be corrupted itself; it lies where moth and rust corrupt not: nor can it be enjoyed by corrupt persons; *corruption* cannot *inherit incorruption*; in order to enjoy it, the dead will be *raised incorrupible*, and *this corruptible must put on incorruption*^c, and be clear of every corruption, natural and sinful. Again, the crown the racers in the above exercises ran for, was a withering and fading one, as even those made of green and living parsley used in the Nemean exercises were ^d; but the crown of eternal glory and happiness, is a *crown of glory that fadeth not away*; an *amarantbine* crown, as the word ^e is, alluding to such crowns as were made of the herb *amaranthus*, which is immarcessible, and never fades, as its name imports ^f; and of which crowns were made in the winter-season: so when this happiness is signified by an inheritance, it is called an *inheritance that fadeth not away*; it is durable and lasting, yea, everlasting; and therefore expressed by everlasting habitations; by an house eternal; by an eternal inheritance; and by the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ: and for the same reason it is sometimes called the *crown of life*^g, because it is a crown for life, as all crowns are not, even for an eternal life; yea, is eternal life itself, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

2. The happiness the apostle had a view of, and faith in, is further described as a *crown of righteousness*; still alluding to the crowns given to conquerors in the Grecian exercises, such as were obtained in a lawful manner, and legally adjudged to them; for, as the apostle says elsewhere, alluding to the same custom, *if a man strive for masteries, who shall have the honour of being declared the*

conqueror,

^y Pausan. Corinth. five l. 2. p. 88. ^z Diodor. Sicul. l. 16. p. 470. Plutarch. Sympos. l. 5. problem 3. p. 676. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8. ^x Θαλάττοις Κορινθίοις σελινοῖς, Pindar. Nemeon. ode 4.4. Vid. Olymp. ode 13.2. & Isthmion. ode 2.1. & ode 8.6. ^b 1 Pet. i.4.

^c 1 Cor xv. 50, 52, 53. ^d Pausan. Arcad. five l. 8. p. 532. Rlin. l. 19. c. 8. Tertullian. de Corona, c. 7. ^e Τοις αμαρανθίνοις ταῖς δόξῃς σεφανοῖς, 1 Pet. v. 4.

^g Summa ejus natura in nomine est appellato, quoniam non marcescat, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 8. ^a James i. 12. Rev. ii. 10.

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conqueror, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully^s; if he used any illicit methods to obtain the prize, when detected, even after the prize was declared for him, he was disgraced, and the true and right conqueror, even though he might be dead, had the crown adjudged to him^t; such strict justice was observed in those exercises; hence the crowns thus distributed were called *τιμων θιμητικτοις*¹, “crowns wreathed or platted by justice:” in allusion to which, the apostle calls the heavenly happiness *a crown of righteousness*; it is what the saint comes at in a legal manner, what he has a just right unto; it is a kingdom his heavenly Father has bequeathed unto him; it is an inheritance he is born heir apparent to, and for which he has a meetness through the grace of God; and his title to it lies in the righteousness of Christ: no unrighteous man can inherit this crown and kingdom; and he must have a better righteousness than his own, or he will never be put into the possession of it; wherefore our apostle desired to be found in Christ, *not having on his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ*^k; by which being justified, such become heirs of eternal life, are intitled to it, and shall most surely possess it. Moreover, though this crown is not given for the fidelity and integrity of those that fight and run, and keep the faith; yet it is the consequence thereof, and follows thereon, according to the divine promise, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life*^l. Besides, this epithet of *righteousness*, may express the state and condition of the happy crowned ones; that it is a state of purity, holiness and righteousness; a state in which none but *righteousness* dwells, or righteous persons, who are made righteousness itself in the Lord; and so is called the *crown of righteousness*, just as it is the *hope of righteousness*^m; that is, a state of righteousness which is hoped and waited for.

3. This happiness is further described as *laid up*; laid up in the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure; where all grace and all spiritual blessings are secured for the saints, and their glory also; it cannot be said how great that goodness is, which is there laid up for them: this crown is also laid up in the hands of Christ the mediator; in whose hands the saints themselves are, and are safe; and where all fulness of grace is treasured up for them, and their life of glory is hid and preserved: it is also laid up in heaven, and is the same with the *hope laid up in heaven*ⁿ, that is, the heavenly glory hoped for; and the *inheritance reserved in heaven*^o: things that are laid up, are hid and out of sight; the glories of another world are invisible; they are *things that are not seen and hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*^p

and

^s 2 Tim. ii. 5. ^t Instances of which may be seen in Pausan, Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 520.

¹ Πιμένας θιμητικτοις αριστοις λατοιδα τιμων, Pindar. Nemeon. ode 9. 11. ^k Phil. iii. 9.

^l Rev. ii. 10. ^m Gal. v. 5. ⁿ Col. i. 5. ^o 1 Peter i. 4.

^p 2 Cor. iv. 18. Rom. viii. 24, 25.

and they are also safe. Crowns are generally laid up in places of great strength and safety; the crown of *England* is secured in the tower of *London*; though as strong a place, and as well guarded as that is, the crown was near being stolen and carried off in the last age: but the crown of life and glory is laid up where *s*believes do not break through, nor steal⁹: and this crown is laid up for particular persons; *for me*; and me, and me; for all the vessels of mercy afore prepared for glory; for all chosen in Christ to holiness and happiness, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus; for all that love him, and love his appearing.

Secondly, The assurance the apostle had of his enjoying this happiness thus described; from whom he expected it would be bestowed upon him; in what way and manner, and at what time.

1. The person who, he was well assured, would give it to him, is Christ, who is described by *the Lord, the righteous Judge*; he is *Lord* of all, *Lord* of lords, and King of kings; who sets them up, and puts them down at his pleasure: and he who has the disposal of kingdoms, crowns and scepters, the apostle believed would give to him a crown of life and immortality: he who upon his ascension was made or declared *Lord and Christ, and constituted head over all things to the church, and fills all in all; fills all the members of it with gifts and grace, and crowns them with loving-kindness and tender mercies*; he had in his hands a crown of glory to bestow on him: he whom *David* could call *my Lord, and Thomas, my Lord and my God*, the apostle knew he had an interest in as such; and therefore counted all things but loss, says he, *for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*¹⁰: and from this his interest in him, no doubt he concluded he should receive the crown from him; whom he also considered, for his further encouragement to believe it, as a *righteous Judge*: this character best agrees with Christ; *for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*¹¹; he has appointed him to be *Judge of quick and dead*¹², which office he will execute at his appearing, when the crown will be given, ver. 1. and for which office he is abundantly qualified, being God omniscient and omnipotent: he is omniscient; he knows all persons and things; he is the living Word, before whom all things are naked and open, with whom we have to do, or to whom we must give an account; he has no need that any man should testify of men to him, for he knows what is in men; and therefore can bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and judge the secrets of all men: and he is the Almighty, the Lord God omnipotent that reigns, and so is able by his power to raise the dead at his coming; to summon all nations before him; to separate one sort of men from another; to pass the decisive sentence on them, and execute it: and he is a righteous Judge; *Jesus Christ the righteous*¹³, the Judge of the whole earth, who will do right; who will judge

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⁹ Matt. vi. 20.

¹⁰ Phil. iii. 8.

¹¹ John v. 22.

¹² Acts x. 42.

¹³ 1 John i. 1.

the world in righteousness, and the people with equity : as in the execution of all his offices, so in this, *righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins*¹. Now from the purity, justice and integrity of Christ as a Judge, the apostle had no doubt of the crown of righteousness being given him by him ; and here also the apostle alludes to the Grecian exercises, in which crowns were given to the conquerors in strict justice² : at first they had only one judge of them, afterwards the number was increased ; but always care was taken that men of strict justice and uprightness were chosen into that office, who would pass a righteous sentence, and give the crown to whom it of right belonged ; and if any were found tardy in this matter, and gave it wrong, by an appeal to an higher court of judicature, if found guilty, they were severely mulcted³ ; it was always from the judges⁴ the conqueror received the crown.

2. The manner in which the apostle expected to have the crown ; by way of gift ; *which the righteous Judge shall give me* : not by way of merit ; he knew his best works were not meritorious of eternal life ; that what he did was not in his own strength, but by the grace of God ; that there is no proportion between works of righteousness done by the best of men, and the crown of life ; that the purest services of the saints, which are their sufferings for Christ, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them ; he knew that though he fought and ran, *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that beweareth mercy*⁵ : the crown of life is promised as a gift, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*⁶ ; the heavenly kingdom is what it is the Father's good pleasure to give ; and eternal life is the free gift of God through Christ ; Christ gives grace, and he gives glory ; he has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him ; and he does give it to all his sheep, that hear his voice, and follow him. Some translate the words of our text, *which the righteous judge shall render unto me*⁷ ; and so they may be translated without any contradiction to the crown being a free gift ; for that will be rendered, not as the reward of mens works, or according to their deserts, but as the fruit of Christ's righteousness, satisfaction, and atonement ; so our salvation, and all the parts of it, are both in a way of grace, and in a way of justice : God is a just God, and a Saviour ; just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus ; and just and faithful to forgive sin, and cleanse from all unrighteousness ; justification, though by the free grace of God, yet being through the righteousness of Christ, is according to the strict justice of God ; and pardon of sin, though according to the riches of grace, is an act of justice ; mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, meet together in the salvation of sinners,

¹ Isa. xi. 5. ² Hence the sentence of those judges is called *αγνοεῖσις*, Pindar. Olymp. Ode 3. 2. ³ Vid. Schmid. Prolegomena in Olympion. p. 12, 13. ⁴ Called *ἀλαρδίκαιοι*. Vid. Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 9. c. 31. ⁵ Rom. ix. 16. ⁶ Rev. ii. 10..
⁷ *Ἄποδοτος*, redder, Grotius.

sinners; in their grace and in their glory: with respect to them, it is of grace; with respect to Christ, and to his satisfaction and righteousness, it is of justice; and so it is given and rendered according to both.

3. The time when the apostle expected the crown, *at that day*; a phrase used by him in other places in this epistle, as in chap. i. 12, 18. that famous day, that well-known day, looked for by all the saints; even the day of Christ's appearing to take his kingdom, and to judge the dead; which is the day of his second coming, as is clear from ver. 1. then he, in his whole person, soul and body, he believed, should enjoy the everlasting happiness, signified by the crown of righteousness.

Thirdly, The apostle adds, by way of encouragement to all believers in Christ, and lovers of him in common, that this crown was laid up for, and would be given to, *not him only*, and such as he, eminent for gifts and usefulness, but *all them also who love his appearing*; the appearing of Christ. In this there is a difference between the crown given to the runner in the Grecian races, the apostle has a respect unto; that crown was given to one only, this to many; of which the apostle thus speaks, *Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize*⁴? but they which run in the christian race, every runner therein, every one that is tried and endures temptation, every one that is faithful unto death, every one that endures to the end, every persevering saint, every overcomer, receives the crown of life; every one that loves the appearing of Christ, be their gifts, their grace, their usefulness, what they may. It will be proper to inquire,

1st, What is meant by the *appearing* of Christ; his second appearance is intended: he *appeared once in the end of the world*; in the end of the Jewish world, their state, civil and ecclesiastic, when he became incarnate, *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*; which having done, he is gone to heaven again; where he indeed *appears in the presence of God* for his people, as their advocate and intercessor; but *to them that look for him, shall be appear the second time without sin unto salvation*⁵: and this is the appearing which is here meant, when he will come to judge the quick and dead; which will be *at his appearing and his kingdom*, as says the apostle in ver. 1. of this chapter; then the dead in Christ will arise, and their bodies be united to their souls, Christ will bring with him: and the living saints will be changed; and both will be caught up together in the clouds, *to meet the Lord in the air*: and this will be a virtual judgment of them, and a declaring them to be the happy persons to whom the crown belongs: as there will be also a judging of the wicked then found alive, who will perish in the general conflagration, when the earth, and all therein, shall be burnt up; and when Christ will enter upon his personal reign and kingdom, which will continue a thousand years; at the close of which all the wicked will be raised, and

stand, small and great, before the judgment-seat, and will be adjudged to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. This appearance of Christ will be a glorious one; his first appearance was mean; he had no form nor comeliness desirable by men; he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and in the form of a servant: but his second appearance will be without sin, and any sinless infirmities; it will be a glorious one: he will come *in his own glory*; in the glory of his divine nature, the perfections of which will be gloriously displayed; and in the glory of his human nature, being in it crowned with glory and honour; and in the glory of his office, as mediator: and *in his Father's glory*; the same with his own, as a divine person, as the only begotten of the Father; and clothed as a Judge, with authority and power by him, to judge the quick and dead; and *in the glory of his holy angels*¹, as attendants on him, and ready to obey his commands: this appearance of Christ will be personal; he himself in person shall descend from heaven; not by another, by a deputy, or by the effusion of the Spirit, but he himself in person; in like manner as he went up to heaven at his ascension, will he come down from thence at his second coming: and this appearance will be visible; he will be seen in the air by all the risen and living saints; and he will be seen in the clouds of heaven; *every eye shall see him*², even all the kindreds of the earth.

2dly, This appearance of Christ is to be loved, and is loved by some: to some indeed it will be the great and dreadful day of the Lord; which will burn like an oven, and consume the wicked root and branch; on sight of him, and even of the sign of the Son of man in heaven, all the tribes of the earth will mourn; and persons of the highest rank and class will flee to rocks and mountains, to hide them from his face, the great day of his wrath being come, and at which also the devils will tremble; but he shall appear to the joy of saints, when others will be ashamed and confounded.

Now such may be said to love his appearing, who pray for his appearing and kingdom, or that his kingdom may come, and he appear in his glory; who look earnestly and wistfully for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who long for it, and hasten in their affections, desires, and petitions for it; and say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" as it shews love to a man and his presence, when one most pressingly desires it, and most earnestly and ardently wishes and longs for it: and there are many reasons to be given, why the appearance of Christ should be loved by his saints.

1. Because then they shall see the person whom they love, in all his beauty, glory and excellencies; now *whom having not seen, they love*³; they have not seen him with their bodily eyes, and yet having heard and known much of him, their affections are towards him; but then they shall see him in the flesh, and with their eyes behold him, and not another: now sometimes they lose sight of

him

¹ Luke ix. 26.

² Rev. i. 7.

³ 1 Peter i. 8.

him in a spiritual sense; he withdraws himself from them, and they know not where he is, and they go in quest of him, saying to one and another, *saw ye him whom my soul loveth*¹? but now he will be always in view, and they will see him, of whom they have often said, *whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee*²!

2. Because they will then see him who has so loved them; so loved them, as to become incarnate for them; so loved them, as to lay down his life for them; so loved them, as to wash them from their sins in his blood; so loved them, as to bear their sins, and all the punishment due unto them, to suffer, the just for the unjust; so loved them, as to be delivered into the hands of justice and death for their offences, and to rise again for their justification; the appearance and sight of such a person, must needs be loved by those to whom he has shewn so much love.

3. Because his appearance will be a glorious one, as before observed, and therefore to be looked for gladly, to be loved and longed for; *looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*³.

4. Because when Christ shall appear, his saints *shall appear with him*; their souls will be brought along with him, and their bodies will be raised, and both re-united, and they all *appear in glory*⁴ with him, with a glory both on their souls and bodies: *when he shall appear, they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is*⁵; see him in his glory, and be conformed unto him, and changed into the same image and likeness, so far as they are capable of; and then shall they be completely satisfied, and not before; *as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake in thy likeness*⁶: and it is not to be wondered at, that such persons should love the appearing of Christ.

5. Because the saints at Christ's appearing shall not only see him, and be like him, but they shall receive much from him; much grace they have received from him now, but they will then receive it in its full perfection; wherefore they are exhorted to *gird up the loins of their mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ*⁷: and when also they shall receive from him the crown of life and righteousness; for *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, not only the under-shepherds that are faithful, but even all the sheep themselves, that hear the voice of Christ, and follow him, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*⁸.

6. Because then the saints will be put into the possession of their complete salvation; for *to them that look for him, will Christ appear the second time without sin unto salvation*⁹: when he came the first time, salvation was wrought out by him for them, he became the author of it; and it is brought home to them by the

¹ Cant. iii. 1. ² Psalm lxxviii. 25. ³ Titus ii. 13. ⁴ Col. iii. 4. ⁵ John iii. 2. ⁶ Psalm xvii. 15. ⁷ 1 Peter i. 13. ⁸ 1 Peter v. 4. ⁹ Heb. ix. 28.

the Spirit of God at conversion, and applied unto them, and they are shewn their interest in it; but as yet are not in the full enjoyment of it; though now is their salvation nearer than when they first believed, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time¹; that is, when Christ shall appear, and reveal it to them, and put them in the full possession of it.

7. The appearing of Christ is to be loved by the saints, because they shall be with him, and be for ever with him, and never part more: here they have a visit from Christ now and then, and this but short; he is like a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but when he shall come again from heaven, with all the saints, the dead raised, and the living changed, they shall be caught up to meet him, and so shall they be ever with the Lord²; with which words they may comfort one another now, whilst they are looking and longing for the appearing of Christ.

Thus have I considered this passage of scripture, as briefly as I well could, at the request of the surviving relative of the deceased; of whom it may be expected I should give some account: his person, doctrine, and manner of life, were known to many, if not most of you; some things I may be able to say, not known by you, or but by a few.

The Reverend Mr WILLIAM ANDERSON was called by the grace of God under my ministry, between forty and fifty years ago; for I find on search, that he was baptized by me on a profession of his faith, Jan. 1, 1723-4, near forty-four years ago; and soon after was received into fellowship with this church, with which he walked very honourably and comfortably as a private member for several years: and in process of time, it being perceived and thought by some that he had a gift for public usefulness, he was called by the church to the exercise of it; and after sufficient trial, he was regularly sent forth to preach the gospel, where God in his providence might call him; and for some time he preached occasionally among the churches, with good liking and approbation; and in a course of time, I am not able to say exactly how long, he was invited by a small destitute people in Westminster, to preach unto them; which he accordingly did, to their great satisfaction; and after some time they chose him to be their pastor, and gave him a call to take upon him that office, which he accepted of; and was ordained, May 12, 1743, upwards of twenty-four years ago. This charge he undertook, not with any sinister and worldly views, the people being few, and for the most part poor, and were far from being capable of providing a proper maintenance for him; and certain it is, he left a very lucrative employment to serve them, and the interest of Christ among them, on which

¹ Rom. xiii. 12 1 Peter i. 5.

² & Thess. iv. 17, 18.

which his heart was set ; and it pleased God to bless his labours, both for edification and conversion, so that there was an increase both of audience and members ; and he laid himself out indefatigably to serve them, both as to their temporals and spirituels : by his means, and through his interest, a commodious house for worship was built, which they greatly wanted ; and he also brought them to be one of the churches in the *fund*, for the assistance of poor ministers and churches in the country ; in short, he was the instrument of raising them from a low and mean condition, to a greater degree of credit and reputation among the churches than they ever had before : and thus they went on comfortably and harmoniously for many years ; but of late a *sad retaliation* has been made him for all his work and labour of love ! the *walls* of that house, built by him, through his interest, and the *pulpit* in it, out of which he was kept, will be standing witnesses against the *people* that meet in the one, and the *man* that fills the other, for their *unparalleled ingratitude* to him ; I say, *unparalleled*, for I am persuaded, that neither the memory of any man living, nor perhaps the history of any age, can furnish an instance similar to this case ; that a worthy minister of the gospel should be divested of his office, and turned out of his place, when no charge, neither of *immorality* nor of *false doctrine*, was laid against him. Such hard usage did this faithful minister of Christ meet with ! these were the wounds he received in the house of those he once thought his friends ; the pain of which went to his heart, and the anguish thereof drank up his spirits. Nevertheless he ceased not from his Master's work ; and which he performed with more vigour, comfort and clearfulness, than could have been expected, among those few that cleaved unto him, and abode with him ; and so he continued till his last illness seized him, which it seems was in this pulpit a few weeks ago. This affliction he bore with great patience ; though his bodily pains were sometimes so great, as caused him to cry out in the extremity of them, and to pray and desire his friends to pray for him, that the God of patience would give him more : not a murmuring word against the hand of the Lord was heard from him throughout the whole ; nor did any worldly concerns, or any others, distress his mind ; nor was the enemy of souls suffered to buffet him, which he thought a great mercy. He expressed the inward joy and comfort he felt, to various persons at different times : to one, that the doctrines he had preached to others, he now found to be the comfort of his soul :—to another, that he saw Christ to be his foundation, and doubted not of his interest in him ; and in the presence of several declared, that Christ was the only bottom he had to rest on ; and that he was precious to him, had been, and would be so :—to another, that the indissoluble union between Christ and his people, was his great support ; but wanted to find himself in a more waiting posture :—to another, who said to him, Sir, you have almost finished your course ; he answered, Yes ; but I know, said he, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which he spoke

spoke with an emphasis:—to another, What, my dear child, my joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord!—this he spoke with an ecstasy of joy:—to another, that saw his lips move, and asked him what he said, his answer was, though I am so unworthy in myself, yet I am complete in him; meaning in Christ:—at another time he was heard to say, “*Is Ephraim a dear son? is he a pleasant child?*” “can it be that he is a pleasant child? he answered, yes, he is;” and with an appropriation to himself.—A few hours before his death, he thus expressed himself, in the words of the church, in the hearing of many friends, *let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine*; I say, *is better than wine*: a ministering brother coming into the room, and to his bed-side at the same time, he said to him, “I am going home;” to which the brother replied, I perceive you are, and going apace; are you comfortable? he said, “I am;” “God is with me, and will be with me.”—About an hour before he died, he uttered these words, “my God, my God, my God in Christ!” Then, Sir, said a stander by, you have enough; he replied, “I have.” Thus died this worthy servant of Christ, who is now entered into the joy of his Lord, and into his rest; and you, his mournful widow, may dry up your tears, and rather rejoice that he is gone; where he is free from all trouble and distress; where there is no more pain, no more sorrow and crying, no more death; where he is delivered from, and is out of the reach of every open enemy, and every faithless friend; and where he enjoys uninterrupted communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and with angels and glorified saints. And as for you, his little flock who cleaved unto him, and followed him in his adversity, as I understand you design to keep together to see what the Lord will do with you, be encouraged so to do; for though you may be saying, *By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small;* the God of Jacob can raise you up; and multiply you, that ye be not few; and glorify you, that ye be not small; sometimes from small beginnings great things arise: if God should send you a pastor, to feed you with knowledge and understanding, which I perceive you have some hope of; if God should bless his labours, the place of your tent may be enlarged, and the curtains of your habitations may be stretched forth, and God may increase you with men as a flock; frequently meet together, pray earnestly and constantly, who knows but God may have a blessing in store for you? To conclude; since we have all in one shape or another a warfare to war, a race to run, and a trust to discharge; let us manfully fight till the warfare is accomplished; and run, with patience and diligence, the remainder of the race set before us; and faithfully perform the trust reposed in us; that when all is done and over, we may enjoy the crown of righteousness, which is in common provided for all that love the appearing of Christ.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

